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The DOUBLE DEALER

".....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth."

THE IMPERTURABLE LIBERAL

ONE week before the Earth collides with the planet Mars and ends all discussion of relativity, the Liberal Weeklies will appear with a dignified little note to the effect that the impending catastrophe will make no difference in the policy of the magazine. Will follow discussion of the agrarian question, the garment trade and then modestly in their proper place book reviews. For the Liberal is an imperturbable human.

He is not in great numbers. Perhaps his whole clan numbers one hundred thousand in the entire United States. His creed is quite simple. He believes that life at bottom is altogether sound; that a few changes in the Senate, in the Supreme Court, in the architecture of tenement houses, in the wage scale, etc, etc, etc., would bring about a new Heaven and a new Earth. He has no apparent ax to grind. For, whereas it may be charged against the Radical that he is opposed to things as they are because he has not the goods of life, and against the Conservative that he stands pat because he has, the Liberal would gain nothing by the effecting of his plans save a necessity to gather newer dishes to wash. Being thus a little nobler than other men he adopts an impersonality toward events that is well-nigh godlike. War dismays him no more than a strike of the garment workers, since he can figure the cost of lives against ultimate rewards in a manner which is clairvoyant and mathematical and exact. Apparently he has taken for his motto the Nietzschean exhortation "Be hard"! His credo might be said to be, "I believe in the *New Republic, The Nation,* and *The Dial;* in Walter Lippmann, Oswald Garrison Villard and Francis Hackett and in the salvation of the world by amiable discussion."

Perhaps a closer examination of the species *liberalis* will be instructive. Through unsympathetic eyes some curious anomalies appear. For instance, your Liberal addresses his appeal to the masses, derives his support from the plutocrats and is hearkened to by other Liberals. For instance, though it be an article of his faith that art is the highest function of life, he treats it in reality as a dessert to be tagged onto the main wholesome business of life or perhaps as a tip to the waiter. Though he talks a great deal about Art (with a capital A) he passes with relief to the bituminous coal miners "problem." That is where his heart truly lies. Though his policies are usually not those of the two

great political parties, let one of their leaders lean for a second toward a liberal view of matters and he will be seized upon as the hope of American Democracy and "Mistered" all over the place. He is not a prohibitionist for he dreads to be called a puritan, nor is he an exponent of alcohol since he would blush to be thought a defender of intoxication.

Indeed the Liberal is *au fond* the most conservative of all men. His heart is tenderer than his brain. Moreover, he is fearful of the common people and never ceases to soothe them by suggested reform. Nevertheless his real sympathies lie with the white collared, the clean-handed. Luxury is the breath of his life. Only from a safe elevation does he work for the "sweaty night-capped" millions. But if he continues to hold to the same economics, the same philosophy that he had at Harvard we can find it in our hearts to palliate such faithfulness. As Giovanni Papini says, a gesture once commenced must be carried to its conclusion, at any cost.

* * *

THE SENTIMENTAL MR. MENCKEN

THAT Mr. Henry Louis Mencken of Baltimore, Maryland, wields a wicked stylus, goes without saying. Critic-at-large, penman plenipotentiary to these United States of America, he tells the world how and where to get off. That this world—"the worst of all posible worlds"—will have none of him, is, perhaps, a moot question. But that this same Mr. Mencken is an incurable sentimentalist, a blown in the glass Utopian, will, I am confident, be received with merry ha! ha's! from our hodiernal wiseacres. The statement, however, is not without foundation. Take up either of Mr. Mencken's books of "prejudices" and you will find scattered all through these brilliant rehashings from "The Aristocrat Among Magazines," innumerable give-aways. I shall not here rehash the rehashings. If you doubt me and are curious, get hold of the books and find out for yourself. Between the lines and down the line from "Ventures in Verse," juvenilia now forsworn by its author, through, "In Defense of Women," "A Book of Calumny," etc., to the latest feuilleton in the latest number of his and Mr. Nathan's entertaining medium, you may read, if you have an eye, the veiled confessions of an incorrigible sentimentalist—the idealist at bay smirking from behind a mass of mordant persiflage.

A man, more or less, convicts himself in his literary, especially in his poetic, judgments. Pick up at random a recent issue of the aforementioned magazine. Note the verse therein displayed. What find you? Certainly not what you would be led to expect from its editorial policy. The viriler, more individual product of the authentic skald is conspicuously absent. In its place you are regaled with flaming passionate poems, tawdry superficial lyrics, sonnets to spring, Jennie-kissed-me stuff — the stagnant sugar-water of yesterday done by "up-to-the-minute" Leigh Hunts and Mrs. Hemanses—in fact all the old metrical glucose. Strange, that the cynical Mr. Mencken, in the prose he prints, studiously avoids the romantic attitude;

whereas, Mr. Mencken, the "sentimental" indubitably dominates the lyrical exhibit.

In his ardent friendships this gentleman yet again betrays himself. Show me a fellow who has the potentiality for friendship, without being a Sentimental Tommy at heart. "There is little friendship in the world, and least of all, between equals." As true now as it was in Lord Verulam's day. Friends are rare. This most admirable relation between man and man is to be attained only by way of mutual sentiments and prejudices. Pardon the platitude. Mencken is a friend and has friends by the score. When he sponsors a man, he sponsors him extravagantly, he veritably lauds him to the seventieth heaven. Remark his eulogies of Conrad, Dreiser, Huneker, and Cabell—instances, of course, not unmeriting enthusiasm. But now and now, the captious critic, seduced by the audacity of some cunning *flaneur,* runs amuck.

One does not go to Mr. Mencken for sound criticsm. Still one reads him, because of, and despite, his unsoundness. As a daring, trenchant paragrapher he is without peer in America to-day. Stepfather to the American language; self-exalted Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Contemporary *Kultur;* press agent to the shade of Nietzsche; Buffoon Extraordinary to His Majesty, Beelzebub; critic *sans pareil* of "everything under the sun;" arbiter to the *intelligentzia;* caustic, pugnacious iconoclast of iconoclasts, he remains, beneath the obvious makeup, a blown in the glass Utopian, the incorrigible sentimentalist.

* * *

THE LATE DISCREDITED WAR

WHAT has become of the blessed messengers of light who told us of the unnamed good that the world war would bring forth? I recall perusing a magazine article in a Red Cross hut near St. Nazaire just before embarking for the U. S. A. The writer quoted Latin; he quoted Greek, and he stated that the men who had fought in the war were the coming aristocrats of the country, that the lowliest dago private in the infantry would be one of the founders of the new society. He even besought the doughboy not to be too haughty towards those at home who could not pretend to fathom his Byronic melancholy and nobility. The author was a grey scientist.

Perhaps you are more familiar with the writings of the Coningsby Dawson School, "The Glory of the Trenches," "Ordeal by Fire," "The End of Materialism." In its more democratic form: "Do you think that the boys who went through the war, that were in the trenches are going to let themselves be misgoverned? You can bet your bottom dollar that they are not; they are going to be the greatest force for good government in the country," and so on—and so on. Ah, confident gentlemen, unconscious assistants of the Victory Loan Publicity Department, what cheer?

The "haughty aristocratic" doughboy came back to this country and gratefully accepted the first job he could land, nor did he care greatly whether his boss had been a ranking officer in a shock regiment or one of the thousand war mil-

lionaires. Gone after their spiral leggings are their martial manners. These "supermen" hide their nobility so well that they are often indistinguishable from the helots they live among. Occasionally one of them wears a slightly tarnished copper button in his lapel.

But what of the world they benefited, saved for democracy, virilized? Well some say it's in a bad way and shake their heads sorrowfully. The radicals say it is going to the dogs of Capitalism. The conservatives say it is going to the dogs of Bolshevism. As for virility—it is not on record that the ex-army man is less humble to any one above the rank of employee than, for all his high words, he was to his Company Commander; and he scampers in out of the very rain which drenched him in the gallant campaign of the Argonne Forest.

Yes, the doughboy learned something from the war. He learned that nobody loves the underdogs; that a soft word often turneth away work. He learned to admire the destiny of the man with the soft job behind the lines, the destiny of the man who never got scratched, but especially that of the man at home in blue serge, "the .... who has my job."

Xerxes it is said wept to think that in a few score years there would be not a man jack left of his vast army. Minstrels and minnesingers of the virtues of bellicosity, do you weep that not a phrase remains of your lyric idealism? Not you—you are too busy manufacturing newer certitudes out of the dreams of the mob to whom you cater.

* * *

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

OURS is a credulous public. The printed word is gospel. What we read we believe. It seems never to strike us that the hack who wrote this or that dictum is not infallible, that he is no more of an authority on his subject than, perhaps, we who swallow his muck. But we are visibly impressed. The magazines feature his stuff. He must be good or they would not print him. What a delusion!

This country, and every other country for that matter, is veritably overrun with these literary parasites. Futile creatures who, having tried everything else in the world, turn to the pen as a last resource. What gets them by? Tenacity, drudgery, oiliness, and the press agent. I maintain that the most colossal ass that ever lived, if he insists upon it, may ultimately see his name and nonsense in print. Of course he must toil. Not even this shabbiest objective is attained without exertion. He *must* toil. And then too, he must catch the trick. A certain callidity is necessary to the craft. But barring this, if he insists, ultimately he will find his name adorning the cover of *The Atlantic Monthly* or the enlightened entrails of *The Saturday Evening Post.* He will arive if he must; he must if he will.

This by way of preamble. What really inspired these sapient observations was the astonishing success of such recent novels as "Main Street" and "Miss Lulu Bett," and, in a lesser degree, "Zell," "Moon-Calf" and "Poor White." "Poor White" despite its chaoticity (perhaps Mr. Harding will adopt the word)

is a remarkable book. But the others! Page the expletive. Mr. Lewis' masterpiece, now in its half million more or less, is simply blather—dull, pretentious blather—smeared on, overdone by a would-be wit of the lowest order. Perhaps, you think this a bit overstated, but take it or leave it, as one humble individual's reaction to this much bruited book. What put it over? A happy title, popular motif, and the press agent—that omnipresent sleuth, the press agent. Mind you, he is plural and lurks behind many guises. Quite often he is innocent of his office—a good critic gone wrong, or the girl at a gathering who hasn't read the book but thinks it "simply splendid." More often, though, he is but a poor hack hired by publishers to cry their wares. In the case of "Lulu," the footlights combined with paid puffs from dramatic Johnnies pushed along the work. Mr. Aikman's "Zell" might have been written by a Kansas City college boy. It is puerile, superficial, ambitious at best. The characters have no more life in them than a taxidermist's *fauna*—stuffed, stupid, unreal. "Moon-Calf" is slighter. If this book is a novel, Miss Lowell's quondam bathtub episode is a poem.

But why go on. By now we are both bored. Let these neo-fictioneers go back to their vaudeville. What a show it is—two dollars the price of admission; two hours of tedium the reward. Read on, good people, whet your jaded tastes, if you can with these ephemeral fellows. But mind you, Thomas Hardy, Conrad, Anatole France, George Moore, Dreiser, Cabell and Willa Cather, live, breathe and write today. How many of you, I hazard, have read "The Return of the Native," "The Nigger of the Narcissus," "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard," "Evelyn Innes," "The Titan," "The Cream of the Jest" or "My Antonia"?

But read your Main Streets, revel in your boredom. Small wonder that Mrs. Wharton's "Age of Innocence," though a second rate novel, received the fiction award for last year. Here in all events is a book. Not, of course, *the* book, but a book done by a craftsman who knows her craft. Whereas—well, ours is indeed a credulous public. Ho, for The Great American Drivel!

* * *

You hear of but one wise man, and all that he knew was—that he knew nothing.—*Congreve.*

Porphyro in Akron

BY HART CRANE

I

Greeting the dawn
A shift of rubber workers presses down
South Main.
With the stubbornness of muddy water
It dwindles at each cross-line
Until you feel the weight of many cars,
North-bound, and East and West,
Absorbing and conveying weariness,—
Rumbling over the hills.

Akron, "high place,"—
A bunch of smoking hills
Among rolling Ohio hills.

The dark-skinned Greeks grin at each other
In the streets and alleys.
The Greek grins and fights with the Swede,—
And the Fjords and the Aegean are remembered.

The plough, the sword,
The trowel,—and the monkey wrench!
O City, your axles need not the oil of song.
I will whisper words to myself
And put them in my pockets.
I will go and pitch quoits with old men
In the dust of a road.

II

And some of them will be "Americans,"
Using the latest ice-box and buying Fords;
And others—

I remember one Sunday noon,
Harry and I, "the gentlemen,"—seated around
A table of raisin-jack and wine, our host
Setting down a glass and saying,—
"One month,—I go back rich.
I ride black horse . . . Have many sheep."
And his wife, like a mountain, coming in
With four tiny black-eyed girls around her
Twinkling like little Christmas trees.

And some Sunday fiddlers,
Roumanian business men,
Played ragtime and dances before the door,
And we overpayed them because we felt like it.

III

Pull down the hotel counterpane
And hitch yourself up to your book.

"Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeleine's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon. . . ."

"Connais tu le pays . . .?"

Your mother sang that in a stuffy parlour
One summer day in a little town
Where you had started to grow.
And you were outside as soon as you
Could get away from the company
To find the only rose on the bush in the front yard.

But look up, Porphyro—your toes
Are ridiculously tapping
The spindles at the foot of the bed.

The stars are drowned in a slow rain,
And a hash of noises is slung up from the street.
You ought, really, to try to sleep,
Even though, in this town, poetry's a
Bedroom occupation.

Dragon*

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY JEANNETTE MARKS

TIME—*Toward the end of a hot summer afternoon.*

PLACE—SCENE 1: *The bedroom of a mansion on the Hudson.*

SCENE 2: *The same a few days later.*

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

SHARON, *a boy seven years old.*

AUNT MARTHA, *the old nurse.*

VERNA, *the young nurse.*

THE MASTER.

SCENE I

Back in the shadows of a large, palatial room is a small bed in which the figure of a child can be seen. By the big windows two women sit. They are looking out upon the hillside, by turns they are silent or speak, but always they rock.

When they are silent the room is so quiet that the flight of a bird before the open window sounds loud, the breathing of the sleeping child comes and goes audibly, and the rattle of steam hammers rises in a clamor from the river valley below the house. From time to time a dog barks insistently.

The old nurse, Aunt Martha, has on a crisp white cap. But beneath it her brow is moist and the handkerchief about her neck is wet. The hair of the young nurse, Verna, is golden and uncovered. Against the wall the silhouettes of their rocking heads are seen very dim as they fan the wall space, and the only objects which suggest coolness.

OLD NURSE

(*Yawning*).

Dear, this scorching heat even in the great house!

VERNA

(*Turning to look at the boy.*)

But he's sleeping.

OLD NURSE

I feel as if all my old veins were swollen.

VERNA

I know. In this heat one seems bigger than one really is.

OLD NURSE

Many a time, Verna, have I sat this way by the boy's father far into the night to make him quiet.

VERNA

Was the Master delicate, too?

OLD NURSE

Yes, like the boy there. Obedient and lovable he was, too.

VERNA

What made him change?

OLD NURSE

How can I tell! He has never changed to me.

VERNA

But to her?

OLD NURSE

Yes, to her!

(*She does not go on.*)

VERNA

Well?

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OLD NURSE

(*Sighing*).

He loved her when he married her, but some say she was too good for him. And some say she was not good enough—

VERNA

(*Indignantly*).

They don't know, then.

OLD NURSE

They meant that she was weak where she ought to have been strong—that she ought to have met him on his own footing.

VERNA

Aunt Martha! As well ask the Blessed Virgin or Saint Cecilia to do that! She's too good for him, and no man on God's earth is good enough for her!

OLD NURSE

There, there, Verna! I'm not so sure a woman has the right to be too good for the man who loves her.

VERNA

(*Shocked*).

Aunt Martha!

OLD NURSE

(*Gently*).

Well, he loved her. I am old, Verna, and I have seen more than one woman whose unselfishness and goodness served for nothing but to defeat herself and the life of him who loved her.

VERNA

But, Aunt Martha—

OLD NURSE

I know, Child. But things that seemed plain to me when I was your age are not so simple now.

(*Touching her forehead*).

Dear, dear, my brow is dripping wet!

(*Touching her neck*).

And this handkerchief, too!

(*Looking out the window*).

See how that sand-pit burns in the hot sun!

VERNA

But, Aunt Martha, if the mistress—

OLD NURSE

There, Verna, 'tis not so easy to understand why people do not always come together. How is she?

VERNA

She's one day nearer her death, Aunt Martha.

OLD NURSE

Does she suffer still, Child?

VERNA

Not much, Aunt Martha, but she suffers.

OLD NURSE

Dear, dear, I'm old and this heat is terrible even for me!

VERNA

(*Looking out the windows*).

The air fairly shakes with it.

(*Long metallic rattling and screaming are heard*).

They are swinging the buckets. How the cranes scream!

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, Child, yes. But I'm accustomed to it and don't notice the noise. Now I hear it. It sounds like pain.

VERNA

Yes, and she notices it today.

AUNT MARTHA

(*Shaking her head*).

Yes, yes, the poor darling has suffered so!

VERNA

(*Bitterly*).

And the Master the cause.

AUNT MARTHA

(*With patience*).

I remember that, Verna. When I think of what he was once—well, I cannot understand.

VERNA

It is almost over for her.

AUNT MARTHA

Has he been in her room today?

VERNA

Yes, he was there this afternoon, Aunt Martha.

AUNT MARTHA

What did he do?

VERNA

He held one of the yellow curtains aside and looked down on the foundries. Suddenly he said, "You are troubled by the foundry noise?" She sighed and seemed grateful because he had thought of it.

AUNT MARTHA

What did she say?

VERNA

She said nothing. The room was so close. The smell of the molten metal mounting up to the windows. It turned me faint. There was the sickish smell, too, of the chestnut blossoms beneath the house.

AUNT MARTHA

The air is heavy with their thick, sweet smell. See, the leaves out there in the garden hang wilting and without stirring.

VERNA

Think of men working in that mouth of hell! Not a breath of air even up here! How hot and loud the birds sound singing out there in the elm!

AUNT MARTHA

To my old eyes, you look cool, Child, in that white dress.

VERNA

But I'm not, Aunt Martha. If only the birds wouldn't sing so and that dog would stop its barking.

AUNT MARTHA

I wonder where it is?

VERNA

From the Mistress' windows where I was sitting all day, the river looked like molten steel.

AUNT MARTHA

Did the Master say anything to her?

VERNA

Nothing. When he held the curtain aside I saw that he was crying.

AUNT MARTHA

Poor boy, poor boy, what a reckoning he has to pay!

(*She draws a long deep breath*).

Verna, did I ever show you that picture I have of him when he was a lad?

VERNA

No, Aunt Martha.

AUNT MARTHA

He seemed like my own boy then. I'm old now, but it is all as if it were yesterday.

VERNA

The doctor has told him, Aunt Martha.

AUNT MARTHA

God pity him! Did they talk at all, Child?

VERNA

No, he's killed her and what is there for him to say? He gave her this plague of which she dies. He has broken her heart day by day. Aunt Martha, he has crushed her under his great iron heel the way he crushes his workmen. He—

AUNT MARTHA

Hush, hush, Child, it is cruel to speak so!

VERNA

I won't hush! He's been cruel as the cruelest murderer.

AUNT MARTHA

Hush! Hush! Hush! Dear God, how hot it is!

VERNA

(*Looking over towards the child*).

He sleeps too heavily to wake.

The Old Nurse rises slowly and heavily. She takes a dish of cool water and sponges off the temples of the sleeping boy.

AUNT MARTHA

He breathes in gasps with this hot air.

VERNA

Even the linen straps of my apron are hot to the hand. Poor Mistress, she must suffer more because of this!

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, such heat have I never known, old woman that I am. In the soles of my old feet a pulse beats.

VERNA

My arms are hot and my eyes ache so!

(*She rubs her eyes and flaming cheeks*).

It's as if sand from the pit yonder had been put in them.

AUNT MARTHA

Does she know that she is going?

VERNA

She knows that she is going. When the Master was leaving the room, she looked up out of her white face, and, taking the hand he would not reach out to her, she kissed it.

AUNT MARTHA

She loves him still.

VERNA

I cannot understand, Aunt Martha.

AUNT MARTHA

What did he do?

VERNA

He bowed his head and went out. He said nothing; there was nothing to say, I suppose.

AUNT MARTHA

What has she said since then?

VERNA

Nothing. She lies there, those beautiful eyes still beautiful. She seems to be dreaming or thinking or something, and looking over the roofs of the foundry down upon the Hudson. Once she asked for Sharon.

AUNT MARTHA

Did you tell her the boy was ill?

VERNA

No, I said he slept. Did the Master come in here?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, before Sharon fell asleep.

VERNA

What did he say?

AUNT MARTHA

Nothing. He wanted to fondle the lad. But Sharon drew away and turned his face to the wall.

VERNA

Always the same!

AUNT MARTHA

Always the same!

(*She stops rocking and fans herself*).

One's breath scorches. Thank God, the sun is setting behind the hill.

VERNA

Red as if it had been swung up from the foundry in a bucket-full of metal. See how those black clouds strap the face of it!

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, Child, like a grating. There'll be a storm before long.

VERNA

Aunt Martha, was Sharon always afraid of his father?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, time and again have I seen him shake like a leaf when he saw his father coming. The Master sees it, and he's eating his heart out for the boy's love.

VERNA

(*A little vindictiveness in her voice*).

And can't get it! How much do you suppose the boy knows about what his father has done to his mother and those other poor women bodies?

AUNT MARTHA

Seven years old! How could he know anything, Verna?

VERNA

Then maybe it's because he feels makes him behave like this.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, maybe it's that! Hush!

There is a stir from the bed and both women turn to look.

SHARON

(*In childish treble*).

Mother!

AUNT MARTHA

No, Sharon, your mother's ill today.

SHARON

Could I see her, Nurse? Just once?

AUNT MARTHA

Perhaps a little later.

SHARON

I'm awake now. Couldn't she come in to me?

AUNT MARTHA

Not now.

SHARON

Has she asked about me this afternoon, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

Not yet, darling.

SHARON

If she came in when I'd gone to sleep again, would she know I loved her?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, darling. Nurse would tell her so.

SHARON

Because I do. Are other boys' mothers so beautiful as mine?

AUNT MARTHA

Probably not.

VERNA

(*Sotto voce*).

What you are telling him!

SHARON

What's that, Verna?

VERNA

Nothing.

SHARON

I prickle all over.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, it's the terrible heat.

(*Something strikes against the window*).

SHARON

What's that, Nurse, out there?

AUNT MARTHA

Just a bird flying home, Sharon.

SHARON

I heard him strike against the window, Nurse. Will he come back?

VERNA

Not if he was started in the other direction.

SHARON

Listen! I hear him. He *is* coming back.

(*A bird sings*).

Can Mother hear him?

AUNT MARTHA

Perhaps, darling.

(*Holding up his little hand*).

SHARON

Listen! Now, he's coming nearer and nearer. Now he's going away. Oh, Nurse, don't let him go away!

VERNA

What queer notions that child has!

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, he's different.

SHARON

Won't the bird come again, Nurse?

VERNA

(*Leaving the room*).

There, I'll go tell him to come back.

SHARON

(*Trustfully*).

Yes, do, please.

AUNT MARTHA

Now go to sleep again, Sharon.

(*The Old Nurse bends over him, bathes his temples again in the cool water, turns his pillow, kisses him and puts her old hands over his eyes*).

(*For a minute he is quiet and there is no sound but the cawing of the crows, the continuous fretful barking of a dog and the thump of the steam hammers from the foundry below*).

SHARON

(*Stirring restlessly*).

Nurse, tell me about the Dragon, do!

AUNT MARTHA

Dear me, Child, that old, old story! You don't want that again.

SHARON.

Yes, I do.

AUNT MARTHA

What makes you keep asking for it?

SHARON.

'Cause I'm thinking about it, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

Thinking! Thinking what, darling?

SHARON.

I can't tell you just what, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

Well, it is no story for you, with the night coming on.

SHARON.

It isn't night yet, Nurse. I see a patch of yellow sky.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, yellow where the winds whirl. There's mischief brewing there, Child.

SHARON

Tell me just this once, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

Dear, and it makes one hot to think of dragons.

SHARON

Just this once, please, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

And will you sleep after I've told you?

SHARON

Yes, truly. But I'm so hot; take me up and tell me by the window.

(*The Old Nurse leans over, lays back the sheet and gathers Sharon into her arms. She carries him to the window and sits down with him in her lap, his head against her old bosom*).

AUNT MARTHA

See out there, laddie? Even in this heat there are places out there which seem deep and cool.

SHARON

Yes, I see—like dark velvet.

AUNT MARTHA

The air is like a hot pulse, it comes and goes so.

SHARON

Nurse, what makes that chestnut plume out there bend this way?

AUNT MARTHA

I don't know. It means something,—like this hush.

SHARON

What are you waiting for, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

Nothing, Child. It's the storm coming, and it will be here before long.

SHARON

Then begin, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

There, don't be impatient. Well, let me see, once upon a time there was a valley in which a dragon lived, but no human beings. And the valley was shut in by mountains so high that neither the sunrise nor the sunset ever saw into the valley.

At its entrance there was ice—think, darling, ice!

SHARON

Why do you suppose there was ice there, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

You remember, I told you before it's because dragons are naturally hot and need to keep cool.

SHARON

Oh!

AUNT MARTHA

It was near that entrance the Dragon grew rich, for it was there he killed kings and warriors.

SHARON

What did he do with the kings and warrior he killed, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

Ate them, Child, of course.

SHARON

Oh!

AUNT MARTHA

But this particular dragon had a human boy whom he loved, a boy with golden locks and blue eyes.

SHARON

And he didn't eat his own boy, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

Certainly not. That would be monstrous.

SHARON

Nurse, that boy's mother died, when she found out that boy's father was a dragon, didn't she?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, but usually, child, he looked just like a warrior, not like a dragon at all.

SHARON

What made him a dragon, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

How can I tell? And I'll not go on, Boy, if you keep interrupting me.

(*Sharon presses his head closer to her shoulder*).

SHARON

And then, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

To his little boy the dragon always seemed a noble warrior, and that is as it should be, child. But the boy had heard the trees and flowers and many living and beautiful things telling tales of a Wicked Dragon who lived in the valley.

SHARON

Can they really tell tales?

AUNT MARTHA

Oh, yes, there's nothing living but that tells its tale.

SHARON

But just the same, that Dragon's boy didn't guess that his father was a dragon?

AUNT MARTHA

No, no, he never even dreamed of such a thing. Well, one day the son explained to the father that he wanted to kill that evil old dragon.

SHARON.

What did the father say, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

The father replied that perhaps the dragon wasn't as evil as people said

he was, for maybe it was his fate to love human blood. The son kept on begging for a weapon with which to kill the dragon, till finally the father said he would give it to him but that even without the sword he might be able to pierce the wretched dragon to the heart. After this the poor dragon neither slept nor ate for three whole days. At last he went to the entrance of the valley where the great ice cliffs were, and there he killed an old warrior who had a beautiful daughter, and ate him.

SHARON

Was the Dragon's boy like me, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

He was a deal bigger nor you, child. Well, to make a long story short, the son was young and brave and he rode fast and far.

(*Something strikes against the window. Sharon trembles*).

SHARON.

What's that, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

Just another bird, darling. See, it's growing darker and they're flying home before the storm. The poor little bird missed its way and struck on the window frame.

SHARON

Does he want to come in, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

No, it's his own nest he's looking for.

SHARON

Nurse, something opened its mouth wide down there in the valley. Is it the dragon's mouth?

AUNT MARTHA

There, child, don't be foolish. It was one of the stacks of your father's foundry, belching flame.

SHARON

Oh, I thought it was the dragon's mouth! Someone's coming, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, this way.

(*The child presses his head deeper into her bosom*).

SHARON

Is it the dragon coming?

AUNT MARTHA

Hush, Sharon, it's your father's step. . . . .Yes, sir, yes, he heard you coming.

(*The old woman rises, while Sharon clings still closer to her and begins to cry*).

There, there, it's hot; and he's sick, Master, and fretful.

THE MASTER.

Let me have him. Come!

(*But Sharon shrinks away and begins to cry out wildly*).

SHARON

It's the dragon, the dragon! Take him away, Nurse, take him away!

AUNT MARTHA

There, sir, don't mind, sir! I've been telling him stories, and, ill as he is, he gets confused.

(*The old woman walks up and down the floor with the child, trying to soothe him*).

Listen! It's thundering now, Master, dear. If only it would grow cooler!

(*She turns to the Master. His eyes are on the child, a scowl between his eyebrows, and in the eyes themselves a pleading, savage look. Only his open, hanging hands are limp*).

AUNT MARTHA

(*Coaxingly*).

There now, Boy, won't you go to your Father?

(*But again comes the same cry of terror and the same words*).

AUNT MARTHA

(*Crossly*).

Tut! such foolishness! It's your own Father, Sharon——You won't go? He's an odd child, Master, and I am ashamed.

VERNA

(*Running into the room*).

Sir, sir, come quickly! I've been looking for you; Mistress—

(*Before she can finish, he is gone, the floors of the big house shaking under his heavy running tread*).

(*Verna pauses for a moment, makes signs to the old Nurse, and she, too, is gone, in her haste leaving the door open. Martha looks after her. She can be seen hurrying down the gallery to the furthest door of all. An ominous yellow light floods through the skylights above the big central lobby, and shines on stone balustrades and on brasses*).

AUNT MARTHA

(*Whispering to herself as she puts the child back on his bed*).

Dear, in such heat!

SHARON

What is it, Nurse? What's the matter?

AUNT MARTHA

It's the storm coming?

SHARON

Did someone call?

AUNT MARTHA

No, it's the sound of the wind beginning to cry. The storm is coming now.

SHARON

Mother!....I heard Mother calling.

AUNT MARTHA

No, she's ill today.

(*Sharon springs up*).

SHARON

Mother! I'm here!

(*The old woman's face is frightened. She is trying to hush the boy's cries for his mother when another bird, driven by the storm, now fairly upon them, strikes against the sill and falls into the room*).

(*The sky is already vivid with flashes of lightning, followed closely by crashes of thunder, in between which the moaning and crying of the wind can be heard*).

AUNT MARTHA

No coolness even yet!

SHARON

What's that, Nurse? Is that the dragon's tongue licking?

AUNT MARTHA

It's the lightning, child, the storm is on us. Hot as it is, I must close the windows.

(*A vivid flash is followed by a peal of thunder. For a minute everything in the room, the wide eyes of the child, the anxious wrinkled face of the old woman, the frames of the window panes, the brass knobs of the fire irons, the flat surface of the mirror, quiver and glare with the lightning*).

(*Sharon is sobbing*).

SHARON

The dragon's roaring after us, Nurse.

AUNT MARTHA

Hush, it's the thunder, Child.

(*For a few seconds nothing can be heard inside the room except the loud crying of the child, and outside the scream of the wind. Martha has moved her rocking chair away from the window and over to the bed. She tries to tell him that it can not last long, but her voice is drowned in the tumult*).

(*By this time the old Nurse is rock-*

ing the child and praying. Through the open door of the bedroom she can see out into the great galleries of the house. In their fear the servants have forgotten to draw the curtains and light the lamps, and the lightning plays about the great lobby, now slipping like a lizard down the polished balustrades, then gleaming on the brass rods which hold the stair carpet, now flashing on the polished vases set on the landings, then throwing into relief rows of the closed bedroom doors about the balcony).

(Every instant does the storm seem to center more and more, as if it were a magnet, about the great house. Without cessation now, come the thrusts of lightning, until stairways, balustrades, vases, rods, white doors, and the wide terrified eyes of the child, flicker and quiver with light. The old woman has ceased to rock; she no longer speaks with the child. But she waits, her eyes patient, her lips murmuring the words of a prayer, for what she knows is to be the end).

(Suddenly there is a blinding flash, a noise as if the whole big roof had been ripped apart, an instant of silence, and a burst of flame).

SCENE II

(A few days later in the same bedroom of the great house sit the old Nurse and the young Nurse, rocking as before).

(In the room everything is as it has been when the storm struck the house. The bed in the distant corner, the child on it, his face if anything, paler, the beautiful furnishings of the princely room, the hangings—not a thing in it is altered. Yet through the open door can be seen where a portion of the stone balustrade has been torn away, the walls blackened, and upstairs on the balcony is a great rent which splits the ceiling from that furthest door, now no longer white, back to the ceiling outside the child's bedroom. That distant door swings open, partly charred, and through the black interior of the burned-out chamber can be seen a peaceful twilit river world. Outside the wind is blowing soft and cool through the trees, and in the clear, dusky sky little stars are already twinkling).

(Old Martha looks at the charred door and sighs).

AUNT MARTHA

I miss him so!

VERNA

I suppose you do.

AUNT MARTHA

No one can understand, despite all the wrong he did, how good the Master was to me. And he was once my boy. Dear God, I am an old woman, but I never forget that he was my boy once!

(The child in the bed moves).

VERNA

There, Sharon, go to sleep.

SHARON

I want Mother. Hasn't she asked yet?

VERNA

Nurse told you she'd gone away, and she can't come just now.

SHARON

Oh!——Nurse, what was the end of the story?

AUNT MARTHA

What story?

SHARON

(*Fretfully*).

You know, about the dragon.

VERNA

Come, Aunt Martha, he's better off alone; it's cool now; let's leave him.

AUNT MARTHA

Nay, I don't take up with these new-fangled notions, Verna. My place is here beside the boy's bed, as it was beside his father's.

SHARON

Nurse, I *want* the story. Nurse, you *tell* me that story!

VERNA

Aunt Martha, don't tell him. It's enough, after what the child's been through, to throw him into a fit.

SHARON

Nurse, you promised, and I want to know the end.

AUNT MARTHA

I did promise. And I don't know that the story would be so bad for him, after all.

SHARON

You promised,—you know you did.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, Sharon! And will you go to sleep then?

SHARON

I will when I know the end.

(*With undisguised disapproval the young Nurse sits by while the old woman takes up the tale where she has left it, and tells on to the end of the story about the Dragon*).

AUNT MARTHA

Well, let me see where we were. The Dragon's son met the beautiful daughter of the warrior his father had killed and eaten.

SHARON

Nurse, then he was the one he'd killed and eaten?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, Child.

(*The old woman sighs wearily, as if it were hard to go on with the tale*).

Well, let me see. The beautiful daughter wept. Then the son took the princess's hands and swore not to eat or to drink until he had killed the Dragon.

SHARON

Nurse, was that really his father?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, child. Why do you always ask that question every time I tell you the story?

SHARON

'Cause, Nurse, I'm thinking.

AUNT MARTHA

Well, let me see. Of course the Dragon was unhappy because he knew that his son would keep his oath; also he knew that the dragon would not come in his way. But it was breaking the Dragon father's heart to see the son starving to death, so he decided to give himself up. Let me see. To make a long story short; the young warrior almost died from hunger and thirst, and he was just about to die when his father told him to go, after sunset, ten steps towards the river bank, and that there he would surely find the Dragon.

SHARON

Was it the Hudson?

AUNT MARTHA

No.

SHARON

But that was his *own* father, Nurse?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, and he did, and he rushed upon the poor Dragon; but before he could strike him with his sword, the Dragon's heart broke and he was dead. All the young warrior could do was to stand there wondering why there were tears in the dragon's eyes.

SHARON

Do dragons *really* have broken hearts?

AUNT MARTHA

I suppose sometimes they do, Boy. You see this dragon loved his son so very much.

(*Sharon sighs contentedly*).

SHARON

And that's the end, Nurse? And it was *that* Dragon came got me when the house was burning?

AUNT MARTHA

No, no, Sharon; it was your father got you.

SHARON

But I saw his eyes, Nurse, and they cried; and you said the Dragon—

AUNT MARTHA

Hush, not another word about it. You must go to sleep now.

SHARON

Yes, I will, Nurse, but he took you out, too.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, Sharon, it was your father carried me through the burning hallway.

(*The boy closes his eyes and tugs the covers up about his neck and lies very still*).

(*For a few seconds the two women watch him*).

AUNT MARTHA

There are stars out there.

VERNA

Yes, and the wind blows soft and cool.

(*From the foundries below, lying dark and silent by the Hudson's edge, no noise comes*).

AUNT MARTHA

How strange it seems to have the foundries still.

VERNA

Yes, not a sound.

(*Within the room the child's breathing becomes more and more audible. The old Nurse rises, lights a candle, and goes over to the bedside. Shading the candle light from the child's eyes, she gazes down upon him, upon the delicate troubled face, the blue eyelids, the little parted lips, and one hand thrown back above his head. Closer the old woman looks, whispering*).

AUNT MARTHA

Dear God, how like him, how like him!

VERNA

His lashes are wet and glisten.

AUNT MARTHA

I see nothing.

(*Then satisfied that he sleeps, she steals back to her rocking chair*).

(*In low voices the two women go on talking*).

AUNT MARTHA

It seems a bad dream, Verna—all these years, and I'm old and I've caught the trick of going back more and more to the years when the Master himself was just a little boy. Night and day I'm trying to satisfy myself how this has all happened. The past, even forty years ago, when he lay a tiny speck of a baby in my arms, is clearer now than last week can ever be. How was it, Verna?

He came and got the child and I waited? And then he came and got me—and that's all I seem to know.

VERNA

And then, Aunt Martha, don't you remember he went to fetch out the poor dead Mistress, and the lightning struck again, and killed him just as he reached the bed where she was lying. And the bed and everything in the room was burned, and they together. And then don't you remember, Aunt Martha, the men from the foundry saved all the house from burning by playing the water on it?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, yes, Verna, that's it; I forget each time you tell me. You were in the house?

VERNA

No, Aunt Martha, I ran out when the lightning struck first, and after that the men saved the house.

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, dear God, the house!

SHARON

(*Calling from the bed*).

Nurse!

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, I'm here.

SHARON

Nurse, that Dragon, even if he was a Dragon, loved his boy a good deal, to die for him, didn't he?

AUNT MARTHA

Yes, darling, he loved him better than anything else in the world.

SHARON

Nurse, I wished he hadn't had those tears in his eyes—

(*The treble voice chokes, and a little hand brushes away tears*)

AUNT MARTHA

There, there, of course you do, darling. You see the poor Dragon loved his boy.

SHARON

Nurse, I think that was a pretty *good* Dragon after all.

(Curtain)

* * *

Be Drunken

Be always drunken. Nothing else matters: that is the only question. If you would not feel the horrible burden of Time weighing on your shoulders and crushing you to the earth, be drunken continually.

Drunken with what? With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you will. But be Drunken.

And if sometimes, on the stairs of a palace, or on the green side of a ditch, or in the dreary solitude of your own room, you should awaken and the drunkenness be half or wholly slipped away from you, ask of the wind, or of the wave, or of the star, or of the bird, or of the clock, of whatever flies, or sighs, or sings, or speaks, ask what hour it is; and the wind, wave, star, bird, clock will answer you: "It is the hour to be drunken! Be drunken, if you would not be martyred slaves of Time; be drunken continually! With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you will."—*Baudelaire.*

On Cats and Clowns

BY ARTHUR SYMONS

CATS have always had a peculiar fascination for me. They are Oriental, sombre, mysterious, enigmatical, subtle, cruel, highly sensitive; it is in their eyes that their magic resides. When they undulate they remind me of the undulation of the panthers. Only, when we see these wild animals, they are caged. In their cages they pass a mournful existence nobly, each after his kind, in loneliness or in unwilling companionship; their eyes look past us without seeing us; we have no power over their concentration within the muscles of their vivid limbs or within the coils of their subtle bodies. Humanity, at its best, has much to be ashamed of, physically, beside the supreme physical perfection of the panther and the snake. When cats gaze fixedly into our eyes, there is in their eyes something so inhuman, so remote from us, that their fascination has for us something unholy. All animals are unashamed: cats seem to me the most shameless of all the animals, yet the soul of their flesh is uncontaminated by humiliation.

The Cat's origin seems to be unknown; the supposition is that cats were heard of about 1668 before the birth of Christ. That they were sacred in Egypt we know for certain: Plutarch in his Treatise on Isis and Osiris says that the image of a Cat was placed on the summit of the sistrum as a symbol of the Moon, because of the variety of its skin and because it wandered at night, and because it has as many rings as the days of the Moon; the fact is that the pupils of its eyes grow larger at the time of the full moon and diminish as she diminishes.

Verlaine, as he assured me in Paris, had none of Baudelaire's almost abnormal passion for cats: Baudelaire who, feline by temperament, on that particular side of his genius, possessed, in an excessive degree, electricity; which, in cats, is part of their fascination. As Baudelaire wandered in Paris, if a cat appeared at a street-corner, or on the pavements, he went up to him, attracted him by his diabolical insinuations, took him in his arms and caressed him. In l'Hotel Pimodan, where Baudelaire lived, one would find him uttering his paradoxes on cats before the famous Maryx dressed in a white robe, starred in a bizarre fashion with red spots like drops of blood, gazing up at him from the divan with her Oriental indolence, as she shifted her rings from her left hand to her right hand, hands as perfect as the beauty of her body.

Together with cats and women and adventures, together with his prose and verse and his translations, Baudelaire found something fascinating in clowns and acrobats. Certainly the most amusing fair I ever saw was the Gingerbread Fair at Vincennes, in 1896, when I went with Remy de Gourmont and Havelock Ellis. The sun hurt me like a furnace; but nothing like the heat in Moscow in the summer of 1897.

"It is not given to every man," wrote Baudelaire, "to take a bath of multitude; to play upon crowds is an art; and he alone can plunge, at the expense of human kind, into a debauch of vitality, to whom a fairy has bequeathed in his cradle the love of masks and disguises, the hate of home and the passion of travel. He who does not know how to people his solitude does not know, either, how to be alone in a crowd." The illusion when I left that fair at half past eleven was that of seeing languishing Pierrots, and human dolls turning, with painted smiles, and the dance of shadows of the last lingerers.

From the time when Walter Pater said to me: "An English clown would not have looked at a wolf if he could have seen a tiger," that inspired phrase came back to me, year after year, when I haunted the music-halls, and I knew for certain that none of these curious clowns had in them one touch of imagination. The tragedy of them is that their one and only *métier* is to amuse the crowd; and that as a matter of fact, I know not how many of them were not, in private life, absolutely serious. Always the traditional costume, the dabs of ugly and disfiguring paint, the powder under the paint; and, for the rest, they have their own choice in their jests.

Baudelaire in *De l'Essence du Rire et généralement du Comique dans les Arts Plastiques* simply gives us his own obsessions in regard to what is comic and what is laughable; and he says in one sentence a wonderful thing: "The Indian and Chinese idols ignored the fact that they were ridiculous; it is in us, who are Christians, that the comic exists." One has always to distinguish joy from laughter; and to realize that comedy is an imitation mixed with a certain creative faculty, which becomes grotesque when one's laughter is immoderate "Comique absolu:" does that ever actually exist? Baudelaire, to prove his point if any such point can be proved, gives his impressions of the bizarre stories of Hoffmann, in which he finds inspired conversations and critical dialogues: and he chooses his finest story, *La Princesse Brambilla.* There Giglio Fava, the comic actor who has a double personality, changes at his will his personalities, and declares himself the sworn enemy of the Assyrian Cornelio Chiapperi; and when he becomes an Assyrian prince, he pours out before the Princess all the venom of his scorn on his rival; whom he has changed into a miserable actor condemned to call himself Giglio Fava.

The first English Pantomime Baudelaire saw was given at the Théâtre des Varietiés, when he was struck by their manner of conveying comical effects; the distinguishing quality being violence. Pierrot was not the pale lunatic figure of tradition; he rushed in like a whirlwind and his laughter was like thunder; above the powder on his face he had painted two enormous spots of pure rouge; he had lengthened his mouth by the use of carmine. Morally he was the Pierrot all the world knows, always accompanied by Harlequin and Columbine and Cassandra and Leandre and the Bolognese Doctor. What this clown-Pierrot created was the vertigo of the hyperbole. Then the Cacodemon of absolute Comedy seized on the whole

troop who in their extraordinary gestures showed that they felt themselves hurled into a new existence; they made the signs of windmills with their arms, they seemed like windmills tormented by a tempest; and in the midst of this delirum Harlequin and Columbine escaped, dancing, into the world of more wonderful adventures.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, whose taste for the Circus began in his youth, and which never left him, designed with coloured crayons in 1897 a series of twenty-two amazing miracles in which the purity of his colours and the use of mediums he had never used before shows the certainty of himself to the divining imagination—the certainty that his genius is practically intact. I refer to the huge Album, *Au Cirque*, a priceless possession, which makes me wonder more than ever at Lautrec's flame-like creations. There is in them smoke and fire; the fumes of hell and the smoke of the clouds that hang in mid air between hell and heaven. A god's veiled visage takes veritable shape; and on his lips there is a bitter irony. Did the obscure and fatal initiation of his madness—he was then supposed to be mad—reveal to him visions he had never seen before, visions of worlds unrealized, Hamlet's disembodied visions? I can but imagine that he did; and most certainly from his creation of *Au Cirque* I have referred to.

* * *

Mummy

BY HELEN UNDERWOOD HOYT

Oh name me not for what I seem to be
From these wise thoughts I mouthe so prettily:
They are but cover of the self I am
And for my broken heart bandage of sham—
A painted bandage like a mummy case,
Mask for my weeping, mask for my soul's face.
For I have bound me in wisdom close and tight;
Hidden I live, and secret from all light.
And am I fair who knows or am I wise,
And who shall tear the linen from my eyes
Or strip the mask off winded layer by layer
Until my hidden soul stands proud and bare?
Oh careful words, oh long deceiving sound
That wraps my true thought and my sorrow round,
Hold sure, oh painted wisdom, do not slip
Lest trembling knee be seen, or quivering lip!

A Very Satisfactory God

BY CHARLES J. FINGER

THE lecture was interesting enough in its way and McNabb was felicitous, but he seemed to be filled with a kind of intellectual scorn, sounding that blatantly educated note you hear in sixth rate school superintendents and Chatauquan lecturers. He was a small man, neatly made and his age was hard to guess. He might have been fifty, sixty or seventy, for he was what is called well preserved. Evidently, his lines in life had been cast in pleasant places. As he stood on the little platform, his face was blotted out in a yellow halo because of the odd fashion in which the two oil lamps were hung. It was a poor place for a decent lecture, for it was a very poky, dirty untidy country school house and the seats were the old-time, comfortless church pews, and the building itself was perched at the base of a hill, so that while it was admirably sheltered from the undue violence of the elements, any breeze on a sultry night was effectually choked off. A cheerless place enough, and, if you saw it as I did, doubtless you would sigh as I did remembering that the youth of the south often is educated in such hopeless places. Besides, it was stuffy in there and the rough path by which one climbed to the place was discouraging, for there were loose stones in the way and climbing up the steep slope from the roadway was tiring enough. I was warm when I arrived; clammily warm.

However, the affair being finished, we went to Nelson's place across the hill and had Budweiser under an apple tree, for he had acted the part of the wise virgin when the country went dry. It was pleasantly cool under the stars and the bottles were grateful to the touch with the light dew upon them that told of honest pleasure. Remembering, seeing in my mind's eye the amber and white in those cool glasses, I get nervously irritable with the prohibition fanatics.

There was one thing told of by Nelson that night that sticks in my mind. With his glass resting on the arm of his chair and his legs comfortably stretched out, McNabb had said, in relation to something or other, "the starry heavens have ever stimulated human imagination" and so led to the topic. La Monte of the University, who is great on mythology, said something or other about traces of a belief in Mercury among the Celts and referred to some work on the Mythology of the Races, and for a time, it looked as if we would be launched upon an entirely inconclusive controversy, for someone else seriously quoted the couplet:

"Jack fell down and broke his crown
and Jill came tumbling after,"

contending that Jack and Jill were the Hjuki and Bil of the Edda and signified the waxing and waning of the moon, their bucket indicating the dependence of rainfall on her phases. You know the kind of stuff. Nelson bluntly said that he doubted whether man was capable of progression, holding that Archi-

medes or Aristotle would find us nationally pretty small potatoes, and that started McNabb off again.

He snatched at the phrase "human development." "I do not agree," he said. "We live in one of those rare periods of human development, when many mighty changes replete with rich sources of new emotion, with deep springs of new feeling and action, with new and purer ideals—"

Nelson gave a quick, verbal upper-cut so to speak. "Oh, yes. Stack W. J. B. up against Aristophanes, Sumner in front of Rabelais. Your rich sources of new emotion, begad!"

It became confused and general then, with talk of ouija boards and superstitions, of newspaper science and the *New York Times* telling people that the light of a candle in a window attracted lightning and so on. There were testimonies by way of evidence that culture and ignorance existed side by side. Now and then some phrase shot out like a sky rocket from one or the other, for a half dozen men can chatter like magpies. I remember one or two such, notable lights as it were, in a maze of verbal pyrotechnics. For instance: "We are open-mouthed for anything that's new." "Doubt everywhere; doubt and muddle because we have no standard of values of our own." "Bowled over when authority rears its head."

Out of the melee, McNabb, the theorist fierce and unconquered dragged in something about psychology, a little testily perhaps, and Nelson seemed to override him. I pulled myself out of a mood of reminiscence in which Chicago figured largely, with Michigan Boulevard at night, that big red expanding and contracting electric light sign, a stein of beer and a roof garden all most inextricably mixed to find that Nelson was talking very evenly.

"Much of what passes for mythology and religious belief," he was saying, "is a kind of mosaic. Missionary tales are passed round and distorted. There are explorers and runaways too and the tales they tell, tales of their home, passed from mouth to mouth become misty so that much that we hear of savage beliefs is a mere echo of our own beliefs."

McNabb took a half-glass of beer at a gulp to steady his nerve, opened his mouth and said desperately, "But Max Muller—" Nelson seemed unconscious of the interruption and went on, so McNabb, quite discouraged for the moment, put his hands in his pockets, leaned back in his chair and shook his head dolefully.

"For instance," said Nelson, "there was a fellow on the Gold Coast who set out to give me his notion of the Land of the Dead, and, listening carefully, I came to the conclusion that he was describing a political parade marching about in some Sahara oasis. There seemed to be bicycles, tall hats, dancing girls and camels mixed in with brass bands and things like that, and herds of oxen, too, sacrificed to some deity. And the god had red whiskers. There was no doubt of that. The fellow pulled his own beard, tugged it, then, to make me understand, took a bit of a red sash he had and fitted it to his chin. He was quite earnest about it and took my expressed doubt in sorrow. He couldn't get over it. It worried him. So one day he led me to an old man with a snake-like eye and fingers gnarled and

hooked like a bird's claw. Lord only knows how old he was. With those chaps one gets a notion of vast antiquity. His head was like a skull with parchment over it—you know, parchment that had been pulled over when wet and then left to dry. This fellow was the guardian of the proofs, I gathered. There was some talk, with my man pleading and the old fellow making much mystery and demur, but, finally, he produced a match-box and took from it a scrap of paper. I tell you, you wouldn't handle a page of the original Shakespeare manuscript with greater care than the old chap handled that. And what do you suppose it was? . . . A picture torn from an old *Harper's Weekly,* a picture of a Blaine parade on Broadway. To them it was proof enough; evidence of things unseen. But that wasn't all, for there was a greater treasure still. No museum curator would handle a rare coin with more reverence, nor priest a relic. It was a wrapper from one of those Kansas City corned beef cans, the kind put up for export. You've seen the thing: a gaudily colored affair, highly glazed. It was a picture of a mounted man with a super-buggy whip, driving an immense herd of cattle to a packing house, and in the right-hand upper corner is an inset of Libby or Cudahy, or someone, with cardinal colored whiskers. You see for yourself how notions would mix, and how the old man had his theory, according to which, the herd of beeves was a sacrifice to Libby deified . . . After all, there are all kinds of like things scattered about the world and each has its authentic history. I've seen an old teapot in a Honduras temple and a carved calabash in a polite drawing-room in St. Louis and the owner of each had a tale to tell of his rubbish. Woven theories."

"It seems to me," said McNabb, whose eyes bright as those of a bird seemed to be peering for an opening, "that man everywhere has some dim apprehension of a great, calm law" (he used the adjectives with peculiar unction), "stretching above all these blatant forces about him. He is impressed by a sense of some external purpose working on in the great deeps of the universe. Looking at gods and idols, and I believe and hope I take no conventional view, the shining thread of a truth runs through them all and strings them together. To be sure, the human effort sometimes gets a something visible that is almost grotesque as in the case—"

"You are spinning words, McNabb," interrupted Nelson.

McNabb made a protesting motion with his arm and upset and broke his glass.

"You've got the wrong end of the stick. . . You've got the wrong end of the stick," said Nelson. "You are grafting your notions on things and building a theory. Things work out like this. A savage finds a root that has a faint resemblance to a human head, we'll say. He does just what you might: whittles, trims, shapes it, because to do so amuses him. When his imagination has run its course, someone else improves on it, perhaps adds cocoanut fibre to give it the idea of human hair, or adds a gash here and there for humor. But human imagination is still busy. There is the man of words to come. He

weaves a tale about the carving. The tale is told and retold. Variations creep in. The tale becomes a legend and the legend a myth; the myth in turn, the base for a religious belief perhaps. We, in turn, build theories and—"

"That's well enough," began McNabb. "Still—"

"And so on," continued Nelson. "Just a foolish, irresponsible saying of things; playing on words."

But McNabb was persistent. He leaned forward and fixed Nelson with threatening forefinger. "Consider the persistence of the belief of races in a life beyond death as recorded everywhere. In Anthropology and historical criticism—"

"You must be interrupted, McNabb," said Nelson. "You'd run this into an argument that gets us nowhere. I'm going to tell you something at first hand. At first hand, mind. Listen." He slapped the back of his neck vigorously and caught his mosquito and I had the notion that he wished he could dispose of McNabb in the same way.

"That belief in a future life so wide spread, does not prevent an ardent desire to avoid the speculative bliss, does it? And don't run away with your 'generally accepted views.' It's not so. Mind you, that whittled rot we spoke of might in time get a place in a temple. Admitted. But, would the priests believe the tales they told? Would they? There's their familiarity with it you know. They see the thing daily, touch it, knock it over by chance and all that. The fellows who cleaned the temple, too, and did the dirty work. Would they? They'd experiment, and you know what would be the result of all that independent verification. Disbelief. Utter disbelief! I know how it was when as a boy I said the Lord's prayer backwards to raise the devil. I tried everything. Even built a little altar and sacrificed a chicken to see what'd happen. I felt better when there was nothing doing. Had solid ground beneath my feet."

Nelson paused to drink, then refilled McNabb's glass. He took it a little sulkily I thought. "Seems to me," he went on, "a god would have to have very human characteristics to command any universal respect. I'll tell you a case. A case of a tribe with a satisfactory god.

"I'd been in Cordoba at the time I speak of, doing some work for the Whitsetts in the lignum vitae wood line. Learning of gold in La Serena, I set off with a mule pack outfit intending to strike San Juan. But I missed it; struck too far north up the Quevada; had hard luck. The mule died on me. There was an ecstasy of color there and the clean smell of a world unspoiled, and it wasn't what you'd call bad traveling, for there was plenty of water, and where there's water, anyone can live.

"Presently I met a fellow, a decent chap and quiet, like most unspoiled savages, and we had little trouble in understanding one another for we only dealt in fundamentals. When there's no interest in gossip and no theories, there's little talk necessary. And, too, there's a large admixture of Spanish in all those Indian tongues. He knew I was astray and flung out the statement that his village was near after I had spread out my hands by way of explaining my long trip. He seemed to take a

kind of pride in the beauty of the place, just as a decent civilized man would, plucking a strange flower now and then or pointing to a bird, for man's man, whatever his color.

"His people accepted me, hustled about and fed me, and were as curious to know what I had to tell as a crowd at a village barber shop right here is. My discoverer presently showed me off to his neighbors and we went here and there, the children flocking curiously. Imagine yourself entering a country place. It was like that. But in time we came to the temple, which was a structure made of small tree trunks and a kind of bamboo, roofed in with branches and leaves and hung over the low doorway. There was a certain amount of explanation before we entered and one old fellow nerved himself to intervene. He seemed to be objecting to my entering but he was verbally overcome, one youngish girl railing loudly. She had a name that sounded like 'Kitty' though it wasn't that, and she seemed to be a regular Katherine. 'Taming of the Shrew', you know. In the confusion, I lost track of what was going on and found myself in a sweat, being suspicious of trouble in religious centers.

"It was greenishly cool in there and what I saw, startled me. It was the god. For a moment I thought it was some waxen stuff, so natural it seemed. It came to me with a shock that the people were given to playing tricks, perhaps like the Dyaks of Borneo, you know, who make a wax figure of some enemy and leave it to melt away in the hope that the body of the original will waste. This thing lay on its side with closed eyes and was on a couch made of brush covered with a silky stuff of gossamer delicacy that grew thereabouts. But the face of the thing! It sent the shivers up my spine. Black as the ace of spades it was and two great tusks where the canines should have been. But to beat it all, on the head of it were indubitable horns. Horns, sir!"

"Clearly, demon worshippers," put in McNabb eagerly.

"Don't tag and ticket things" said Nelson. "This thing was alive and breathing like a man asleep and that made it more horrible to look at. I had flashed memories of things read. Of Greek satyrs, German forest sprites, Fentris, the devil even. . . The beast gave a yawn, stretched, sat upright and I saw the hairy chest of a man naked to the waist. A horned ourang-outang it seemed. Then the thing saw me, became suddenly rigid, rolled its heavy lidded eyes, and sat staring as if about to leap; as if crouched to leap. The look is gave me was as fierce and ugly as face could wear. Honest to God, it was the most repulsive-looking creature man could imagine; very powerfully built; somewhat paunchy, and its legs were those of a man. Let me tell you, I lost my composure and got outside as quickly as I could without giving intimation to the attendants that I was the least bit scared. They, I saw, stood with heads bent, hands held at chest level, side by side, thumbs touching, palms turned downwards. I glanced at the Thing as I passed out and saw it eyeing me sidelong, head half turned just as you may have see a startled horse look at you.

"Let me tell you that that night I did little sleeping, but was so played

out with all the walking I'd done, that I couldn't plan leaving the place. I guess I made a pretty fair face of it though and managed to look calm and take it all as a matter of course while the people looked on. Mind you, there was plenty of talking and whispering. 'Kitty' too came to my bed side and chattered away volubly. But I had nightmares and saw the creature in a frenzy of hysteria or laughing in fiendish glee. Figure it out for yourself.

"Next day passed pleasantly, for the god had gone for a walk in the forest, but when the evening cool set in and the white mists crept up the long, narrow valley, there was a great to-do, anouncing the god's return. Later, for half an hour, things were muddled, for the man who found me, together with 'Kitty', set to work to tell me something and I judged it was an invitation to leave. I showed them my blistered feet and that seemed to arouse proper sympathy. Then there were genuflections and signs and hand motions with intitations to me to follow suit. A funny business altogether and I could make little of it. Anyway, after a while, I understood that I was being prepared for a visit to the god and, after some expostulation, I went. There was no way out.

"The upper end of the valley ended in a kind of a cul-de-sac and there was a cave there at the foot of a fairly steep slope. It was very dark at first compared with the evening glow of the sunset in the lower valley, but very gratefully cool and soothing. A mass of greenery made glorious by crimson bloom, covered the opening and a fellow with a spear was on guard, so that the whole had a theatrical appearance. The guard made a sign or two, joined us, and we three went in together. It was quite a little time before I saw the god clearly. He was seated on a knob of rock at the further end. But my companion said something mumblingly and the god nodded. By then, my eyes were sufficiently accustomed to the gloom of the place and I saw his face plainly. The sheer ugliness of it sent a shudder through me and before I was well aware of what was afoot, my two companions had made their hand motions and slipped out.

"Certainly scared, I backed to the cave wall where I saw a good-sized rock like a flattened, truncated cone that might serve as an unhandy club. Not a sound of course except the early night birds outside, heard faintly, and the noise they made seemed to hearten. So for a while, we stood silent, unmoving. Then a queer thing happened. The creature rose to his feet and fell to making motions, raising his arms high above his head, then dropping them. The motion was automatic yet not mechanical, jerky but not angular and the series of gestures were complicated and almost graceful and it was queer to see the Thing come to a position of rest with a certain smartness. The attitude was one of dignity. Its expression seemed to soften. Then:

" 'Don' you all recog'nize it boss?" boomed the Thing. 'Don' you all know it?'

"At that my head went up and my body straightened with a jerk, though there was still a vague uneasiness about me. But the horror became something else as I saw the grotesqueness of the creat-

ure, but still there was a lurking notion in me that it was all an illusion. Too, the Thing was grinning, though, as it seemed in that twilight, quite nervously.

"I pulled myself together. It was an effort though. But there was the thing still grinning, and, as it made what seemed to be a propitiatory motion, I heard in a deep, booming bass, "I allus done unnerstood the ritchool was the same." And the god was bowing, mind you. Little jerky half bows with a motion of the right hand to its head like an abbreviated salute. At that a memory of a Pullman sleeper came before me. Said I, 'Go on—go on,' then added, at a hazard, 'George. Go on George.'

"From the Thing came an unmistakable chuckle, and 'Suah good that sounds boss' said the god with evident delight. And he became voluble. "Suah good boss. I been gone done seen yore charm right away,' he said, pointing to my watch chain, and then things rushed together and fitted with a click. The contortions and signs, the outer and inner guard, the oddly recurring words which I recognized as distorted passwords. At that, my mind went actively to work to recover that white man's supremacy which I had temporarily surrendered to fear.

II.

"In spite of my pants, which were too irregularly slashed for comfort, and certainly for decency, I assumed some dignity in my port as I walked down the village with George the god a little in the rear. It may seem silly too, but I confess that there was a moment of pride when I noticed that I was pointed to with new respect.

"Already the silver points of the first stars were seen before we reached the woods into which we went some three hundred yards deep. We came to a pool, or rather the widening of a brook which seemed like a diamond in a dusky immensity, and, as we sat facing one another across the little water, I remember looking into the pool as in a mirror and seeing the inverted form of the horned man. I seemed to be looking down at some Pan instead of a perfectly mild-mannered god of unknown antecedents.

"Of course I should have got more of his story than I did, but there was that confounded prejudice—color line and all that, and, while he gave me the high lights of his career, he tangled things in the telling most absurdly. Much was inconsequent, irrelevant, but I gathered that he had been guilty of some peccadillo and, when he had first seen me, a white man, feared the long arm of the law.

"His lodge work he had come by honestly in some Arkansas town and I suspect that his dignified manner was the result of his having been a head waiter or something of the kind. For etiquette, it's hard to beat anyone in that profession. Mind you, I'd noticed that my savage friends all used a cotton napkin at meal time. It struck me then as odd.

"However, I gathered that George had got into some trouble in New Orleans, and, to escape the consequences had shipped to South America under the impression that he was en route for Liberia. Landing in Pernambuco, he was astonished beyond measure to find that men of his own color were unintelligible to him, so he had had

trouble. Wandered to Paauhy and tramped to Bahia—tough times, no doubt. But at Bahia he was hailed in his own tongue.

"It was, George said, a Doctor Mayfield, formerly of Chicago, and more particularly of Monadnock Building. Broke, of course. Like so many, he had supposed that all in Latin America were ignorant fools waiting to be exploited. Still, he had a resourceful mind, and, seeing George, had enlisted him as his aide. This is what he did presently. With a base of silver made by hammering out Brazilian dollars, he had made a curved plate which he inserted by what must have been a neat operation, under the negro's scalp where it fitted the contour of the skull very well. Into it he had bored a couple of screw-holes. I examined the fellow's scalp and no one could have told that there was anything foreign there save by the touch. Not a sign of suture. Into the base of a pair of goat horns he had then fixed screws and when the horns were set into place and the hair had gathered about the base, the job came near defying detection. Also, Mayfield had cut off and capped the fellow's canines and so fitted him with a prepared pair of boar's tusks which looked horrible enough, the Lord only knows. That Chicago man was certainly a foresighted fellow and it is a pity that Fate drove him to such straits.

"The experiment was a winner, and when George was in a steel cage and put on exhibit at half a dollar a head, they grew rich—too rich perhaps, for the news went far and wide and there was some rumor of a scientific investigation. So they fled by night and presently came to Arenas Blanco. There they could not stand the mixing of drinks, and George seems to have sampled in too rapid succession, whiskey, gin, pisco, vermouth and native wines. There was a scuffle and the local police had grabbed George by the horns bending the screw in such wise that it was impossible for him to dehorn himself any more. He became separated from his dentist too.

"George was very hazy in the rest of his tale, but I put two and two together and imagined him wandering about in the jungle until he was found, much as I was, a very hungry, meek and gentle wild man. But theories are as readily constructed by savage as by white men, and deification once commenced, went on swimmingly.

"His first notion, when they brought him fruit and other eatables and established him in the temple, was that they were anthropophagi and intended to fatten him, for he, too, was theory-making. But, learning the facts of the case, he lived up to his reputation. His knowledge of secret society work stood him in good stead and he grafted some of the ritual on to the crude forms of worship very effectively. That kind of thing would, of course, appeal to a simple folk. Still, he was a good deity all right and interjected a kind of human justice into such things as he had to deal with, and his people never seemed to doubt him for the simple reason that his notions of right and of wrong coincided with theirs. No labored explanation of things was necessary in an effort to make seeming incongruities fit. There were a few who acted as servitors, priests as it were, and, natu-

rally, they could not doubt but that they had a living god. So his was the *ipse dixit*, and, on the strength of his horns and tusks he delivered the law and the ten commandments, added a few by way of bringing the mosaic law up to date, and there was no questioning his decisions. Taking him all in all, he did very well as a god and seeing him at work later, I had to admit that there was an air of quiet mystery about him that was charming. A highly satisfactory god, in fact."

"But the promulgation of Truth," interjected McNabb. "What of that? It was in your power to—"

Nelson shrugged his shoulders and said "Pish". Then, after lighting his pipe, he busied himself opening a bottle or two. The end of his story was punctuated as it were by "Tank yous" and "Here's luck," as he stepped from man to man offering the beer.

"Let me tell you that I know of one or two of the tribe who set off with fervent eyes to gain new converts . . . (Take a last glass.) Weighed in terms of human happiness, everything was satisfactory and I would not have said a word to upset the thing for worlds . . . (Another bottle won't hurt). If there was a way to do it, I'd send George down an Edison and a few records for he had rigged up a kind of a rough banjo and did fairly well. . . (We'll not have this much longer. Make the most of it.) There was plenty of jollity in their worship."

McNabb then rose to his feet and said something about "fullest development and efficient social organization," but just at that moment there was a general movement to leave, so it was lost in the hand-shakings and farewells.

As I bade him "Good night" he was saying to McNabb, "but don't worry yourself. They'll be all the better men because there are no puritanical prohibitions."

* * *

The Cynic Shamed

BY MARX G. SABEL

Two bluejays and a mockingbird
  Alighted upon a fence,
And looked about, as if to say,
  "Isn't life immense?"

A pompous toad hopped straight in front
  Of me, and squatted down
To sun himself, as lazily
  As any bum in town.

For years my friends have tried in vain
  With many angry words
To shame me, but it took a frog
  And three indifferent birds!

Edgar Lee Masters: An Interview

BY WALTER YUST

"MY friend," said Thackeray once, "two different universes walk about under your hat and under mine." And, when I confess that I have learned chiefly from his brilliant and grim "Spoon River Anthology" what little I know of the particular universe that walks around under Edgar Lee Masters' felt hat, I am only admitting those limitations of universes in general which must preclude the possibility of any one of them actually knowing even itself. As for Mr. Masters' more recent books, they have revealed to me nothing so poignantly as this—

"That where so much is said
One half will never be believed
The other never read."

But if "Spoon River" itself afforded merely a glimpse of the universe walking around under Mr. Masters' hat, at least its chronicles of disillusionment, wasted love, frustrated dreams did lead me to picture a Mr. Masters in the character of an old, morose, German physician of our neighborhood.

This physician, a fat, yellow-skinned man, had no practice, conversed with no one, but spent hours in his dusty, feebly-lighted office. Long after the days when I was wont, with neighborhood youngsters, to scurry away at this man's approach, a newspaper sent me to interview him. The small, dirty room was literally packed with broken-backed and mouldy medical books; newspapers and clippings, most of them faded with age, lay on the torn carpet of the floor. The desk was buried under volumes and periodicals. The air was hot and thick. On the windowsill, with one limp leg hanging over it, lay a battered doll in a gay dress. When the doctor, whose vest was stained with the spilth of many eatings, looked up from his writing, his pin-point eyes burned over smeared, rusty-rimmed glasses.

"I am too busy," he grunted impatiently. "Writing a book about the str-ange and horr-ible diseas-es of mankind." And he pulled out his words slowly, as if the magnitude of the work impressed him too . . .

Whether there was sufficient reason for it or not, as I stood in the elevator mounting to Mr. Masters' fifth-floor law office, Dearborn street, Chicago, memory, annoyingly inopportune, of the sinister old doctor filled my mind. I had a presentiment of an evil half hour, which the grinning, "Mr. Masters? Sure, I know him. He's one of them lawyers I take up and down every day," of the elevator man did not dispel; nor the cordial invitation to "go right in!" of the typist; nor the friendly approach in the outer office of a colleague of Mr. Masters with "Say! Got a match about you?"

After I had waited ten minutes, Mr. Masters, ever so much like Thackeray with his round face and halo of dusty hair, beckoned me into his private office. And soon, in shirt sleeves rolled

up to his elbows, in checkered trousers and vest, and smoking a curved pipe, he was leaning back in his swivel chair. Then, without a smile, he looked me carefully over.

Mr. Masters' office, rather spacious, had the cheerless atmosphere, not of my old physician's—it was too spacious—but of Dr. Grimshawe's out of Hawthorne's novel. At least, it was Dr. Grimshawe who stalked around in the back of my mind as I sat in the law office of this man of dark poems. The floor was carpeted with one or two old rugs; a black safe, doors open, stuffed with files, papers and books, stood over in the corner. Along the wall ranged shelves of drab legal tomes. Typed letters, and a long single row of thumbed books, Sandburg's "Cornhuskers" to Chinese history, gave character to the top of Mr. Masters' flat desk.

Mr. Masters is a strongly-built brown-faced man with milk-white forearms. A striking contrast. His sharp lips seem ever trembling to unflesh the teeth. His eyes have the look about them of a child who has been caught doing something he shouldn't.

While I sat there before him, for one slow moment I had a disquieting sensation that Mr. Masters' searching eyes had quite penetrated my universe and were gathering their fill.

"Behind my poems what is the urge?" he repeated, the blue smoke of his pipe curling about his face and upward. "A desire to tell the truth! Truth, that's all! I don't write for the improvement of people. You can't improve people! They are like cabbage heads! No matter how much you may try to improve cabbage heads, they still remain cabbage!"

Turn the pages of the "Anthology" and they leave you with a sense of horror. Here and there, but only rarely, do you catch the simple beauty which the old Greek poets could put into such an epitaph as, for instance,

> Mariner, ask not whose tomb I am here but be thine own fortune a kinder sea.

or,

> Looking on the monument of a dead boy, Cleotes son of Menesaechmus, pity him who was so beautiful and died.

Mr. Masters' search for truth seems to have driven him to hunt the "str-ange and horrible diseas-es of mankind." That, of course, is a matter of his own universe and not of ours. But his seeming insistence, in not only "Spoon River," but in his later books, that the diseases are the truth, and, if not the whole truth, then the greater part of it, has driven him unconsciously to defend his truth, apparently to like his truth. Many persons don't like it. They prefer to believe there are other truths, whether there are or not. Perhaps, like Tolstoi, they believe that repulsive truth ought to be written about, even in poetry; but also, at moments, like Tolstoi, they'd somehow rather it wouldn't be. And, like Pontius Pilate, perhaps, they ask a question. And the question is a soft cushion at the end of a thumping fall. They ask, "What is truth anyway?" And when such men as William James answer, whatever truth is, "we have to live to-day by what truth we can get to-day, and be ready to-

morrow to call it falsehood"—they can the more easily agree that Mr. Masters' truth is scarcely the truth after all; and that, since he wants to write the truth, and since what he thinks is the truth really isn't, he shouldn't write it. It takes some of the sting out of life to reason, right or wrong, that way. It contributes a measure of happiness to many, who are quite willing to remain blind, in this generation,—which Mr. Masters sees, letting down its bucket for the water of life,

". . .thirsting, spurred by hope,
Kneel upon aching knees,
And with . . .eager hands draw
up the bucketless rope."

Mr. Masters discussed literary traditionalists, who have been charging him with morbidity, a bitter outlook, a pre-occupation with sex and suicide, crude technic and whatnot.

"I never read the critics," he observed with some heat. "I never pay any attention to them. They are a nuisance. They can't do what the poet is trying to do, so they talk about the poet. The poet is an oak which brings forth leaves. The leaves are the poems. The caterpillars on the oak are the critics. And they chew up the leaves, theorizing as to how the oak made them and whether they taste good or not. I don't bother my head about critics. Academic discussions of works of art have little point."

Mr. Masters laid down his pipe and pulled his chair over to the window. He continued to look out of the window while he talked.

"I understand from what I am told that certain critics explain into my verse all sorts of theories about its composition. In the first place, only the 'Anthology' and a comparatively few other poems of mine are in free verse. I have been writing mostly in rime and meter. In the second place, the lines of my free verse are written with no especial conscious effort as to form. I let the idea and the emotion carry the rhythm.

"When an idea for a poem comes to me I jot it down on a piece of paper. Then I think over that idea; I think about it a whole lot, anywhere and wherever I happen to be. After this period of gestation, I am ready to put to paper a complete poem. I rarely have to make any changes. I suppose that is why I am able to write such a volume of verse. My poems are all carefully thought out before I transcribe them. Consequently, the mere copying down comes easily and quickly. And I never use a typewriter."

Before the appearance of "Spoon River," Mr. Masters had published an occasional small volume of rimed verses. These books did not excite public attention. According to Mr. Masters, it was the late William Marion Reedy, editor of "Reedy's Mirror," who urged him to read the Greek Anthology, that collection of brief, sharply executed, epitaphs, some harshly satirical, some humorous, some tender and of unusual beauty. "It was from contemplation of its epitaphs," writes Mr. Masters in the dedication of his "Toward the Gulf," "that my hand unconsciously strayed to the sketches of 'Hod Putt,' 'Serepta The Scold', and other pieces in 'Spoon River', and in 1915 the collection began its most extraordinary career."

Mr. Masters is not prepared to admit that his poems before "Spoon River" show any inferior quality.

"I wrote them while I was working night and day at the law. I published them at my own expense and, of course, they didn't get the proper advertising. And also, people weren't so interested in poetry those days." He published one of these books as early as 1898.

"Spoon River came when people were interested in verse. It was widely advertised; many of the poems in it had been going the rounds of the country before the book appeared. It was written in a form most readers could understand and they recognized in it—life! Keat's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' is beautiful in its way. But readers have to have an intellectual background to appreciate it. People can read and enjoy 'Spoon River' without any of that. Why, look at the numbers of editions it's gone through! And its popularity began right after it was issued. All great masterpieces have immediate popularity."

I asked Mr. Masters to tell me the secret of great masterpieces, and I mentioned that Professor Erskine had written somewhere that poetry is "an invariable function of life, and that if you kill every horse in the world, you destroy the species. But kill off every known and suspected poet, and there will be as many as ever after a generation or two."

"Brains!" replied Mr. Masters. "It takes brains to make a poet!"

It was Plato, you remember, who said that God in his wisdom "took away the minds of poets"; and Macaulay who declared "that in proportion as men know more and think more . . .they . . . make better theories and worse poems; and the much quoted Theseus in "Midsummernight's Dream" who would have it that

"The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact."

And finally, downright Thomas Love Peacock, who, whether with tongue in his cheek or not, irritated Shelley into writing his "Defense of Poetry" called the poet "a semi-barbarian in a civilized community."

"Brains!" Mr. Masters repeated in his low scratchy voice. "There are a lot of young persons who are writing nowadays. It isn't unrest nor the times bringing them out. They are always here. They live for a while and are forgotten. They are like young lawyers; no different. About 6000 lawyers practice in Chicago; at every state examination a couple hundred more become lawyers. Some of them are successful; some are not. Here and there, one of them stands out, big, powerful.

"Poets are just like lawyers in this respect. Every year the number grows. Most of them are indifferent poets. Here and there a man or a woman stands head and shoulders above the rest—an artist to be reckoned with. Because he or she has brains! Brains! They are born with them. Take Goethe, for instance. He had the brains. If he had been interested in the law, and not in poetry, he would have been as great a lawyer as he was a poet. Because he had the brains to start with.

"Of course, brains signify also experience, a knowledge of oneself, a knowledge of life. This thing we call civilization in just the sum-up of what has

been learned by those who have lived before us. The sum-up of what we get out of that and what we in our own lives have lived adds to the power of the brains.

"I never read these passng poets, who die like the grass—oh, once in a while maybe. I don't do much reading at all. I'm quite busy enough with my own writing and thinking. And I find, too, that the reading of works by other writers confuses my own thinking. But I read all the latest books on biological and philosophical subjects."

With some hesitation, I suggested that one criticism of his poems, particularly those published since "Spoon River," has been that they indicate that Mr. Masters has put on the "mantle of a pedagogic prophet" and that a "jumbled scientific learning sits heavily on the poet" in him, and I asked him whether he was interested in scientific books because of the material he could find in them for poems.

"No!" he said. "I read them because I am interested in them. I read other books"—he mentioned one of Gilbert Murray's on Greek literature he had just finished—"when I am travelling.

"But I never read novelists under any circumstances," he added, and the statement was arresting, because I, somehow, have had the suspicion that Mr. Masters is essentially the novelist, who could write "Mitch Millers" or "MacTeagues" or "Jude the Obscures" if he wanted to. I have long suspected that thousands of readers—novel-readers—who had never before and have never since read another volume of poetry, found in "Spoon River" a justly amazing and absorbing story book.

My good old doctor and his "str-ange and horr-ible diseas-es of mankind" still stick in my mind—even after meeting Mr. Masters. It requires a passionate sense of necessity, it would seem to me, to gather together the material and to write such a work; it requires a passionate faith in the ultimate beauty of life . . . And I have often wondered why that little battered doll with the gay dress lay on the dirty windowsill. . .

* * *

Idle Afternoon

BY WILLIAM SAPHIER

I watched two little waves
marching to the shore.
One died with a yawn
the second with a roar.

The Reticence of Caravan

BY THOMAS KENNEDY

I.

IN view of the high fever of expectancy which had consumed him, it was, perhaps, inevitable that Michael Caravan should experience a cold reaction of disappointment.

The Central Club building had not shaken his confidence; its quietly perfect exterior and the unpretentious richness within were quite in harmony with what he had been led to expect, and it was only at the threshold of the lecture hall that a glacial breath, rushing out from the audience composed of members, sickened him with a prevision of catastrophe.

In a moment, the tactfully condescending chairman had maneuvered a way to the raised platform. A polite scattering of applause, well intentioned, vaguely complimentary, greeted the writer's appearance. A moment later as he seated himself at the carved writing desk, the introductory address reached him in blurred fragments.

"Promising young poet" . . . "intellectural treat" . . . "native of our city" . . . The room was intolerably close; fetid with mingled perfumes. A pathetic determination to be uplifted and thrilled, not to be bored, was written on the faces before him. This was the glorious opportunity he had been led to expect; these were the intellectual minority who were awaiting the advent of a messiah to lead them back to the ways of Beauty!

The room itself was a striking testimony to some person's good taste. Whose? Caravan wondered, searching the visages of his audience. He saw wealth, a certain culture, a surface prettiness; that was all. A cruel light dazzled him as he perceived the truth. These animals with money had paid someone else to give their room a loveliness which, though its presence flattered them, they were equally incapable of creating or appreciating. He himself, although the bars were invisible, was no more to them than a lion in a cage.

When the young man had finished reading, the applause was emphatic; almost too sincere, as though it marked the completion of an ordeal. As the assembly disintegrated, the chairman exhibited the lion to various members. They spoke inanities and were suitably answered. Said one artless matron, carried away by her desire to please: "it is such a treat to have a poet for a change; at our last meeting we were entertained by a prestidigitator."

To this remark, Michael Caravan could find no fitting answer.

II.

By habit rather than intention, he turned into the rare book shop. Michael Caravan had walked miles since his escape from the overfed, overdressed monstrosities of the Central Club. The disappointment and shame gnawing at his sensitive soul, had at length produced a

sort of anesthesia, under which a numbed spirit could no longer feel any sharp twinge of pain. He still knew that his dream had been punctured, that an appreciative audience in this materialistic age had been a fool's illusion; but he knew it almost indifferently, and when the haven of old books presented its inviting dusk, he had thought it would be heavenly to rest in that cavern, and to feel the comfort and companionship of dear, dead writers who had also suffered, and who would understand.

Hartnett, the proprietor of the shop, hid behind an exterior perfectly expressed in the word "imposing," a great discernment. He knew that the presence of writers, even unknowns or men of no particular importance, gave his establishment that indefinable something called atmosphere; consequently Caravan and his sort were encouraged to browse among the shelves, to talk quietly together in corners of the dim, cool interior, where they were secretly pointed out to wealthy clients who saw them as picturesque silhouettes against the rich background of many-colored bindings. Sometimes these impecunious men of letters were offered coveted books at astonishing reductions in price, and accepted with almost tearful gratitude. Though the bookseller charged these gratuities to his advertising account, a great compassion mingled with his cynicism. Once he too had dreamed his dreams. He regarded these young visionaries with something like affection, and was glad to give them sanctuary.

Michael Caravan, entering this refuge, was arrested by a strident, singsong chant:

"Little known letters of Kelmway now for the first time offered at public sale four pages foolscap size all in the handwriting of the author perfect condition what'm I offered."

This speech, delivered entirely without pause or expression, by a puffy-faced, fishy-eyed man whose body seemed to have sagged to fit the lines of his baggy suit, was addressed to a gathering which half filled the long, low room. For one horriried instant, Caravan believed he had entered the wrong door. Then he remembered. Hartnett had recently taken to conducting highly profitable auctions of literary relics. The seedy man was the auctioneer, and the gloating throng who pawed eagerly over the pages written by the great dead man, these were collectors.

It occurred to Michael Caravan that Kelmway had been much like himself; patronized or ignored during most of his life, unable to find a publisher, a flat, absolute failure until old age and privation had annealed his heart, made success or failure matters of indifference. It was only after his death that the public had awakened to his bigness. Then the publishers had harvested a fortune; and now these greedy gatherers of rareties, many of them with no conception of the significance of the things over which they haggled, were offering money, one hundred, two hundred, one thousand dollars—he followed the bids —for a confidential utterance of that great broken heart. In a clairvoyant second, Michael Caravan's own life and death passed before his eyes. He saw his own letters . . . Horrible! It was not to be endured. There must be a way of cheating fate. All at once he knew

what had been crystallizing in his brain, and breaking from the shop, he ran toward the room which he called home.

III.

. . . "And so, my dear Howard, I feel that whatever others may say, you will understand. That, after all, is the only thing which has troubled me. The rest of the world? Even if they could understand, they would not care."

The poet finished reading this last paragraph of the long letter he had been writing, and nodded his approval. He wrote, "Michael Caravan" with a flourish of bravado, threw down the pen, and picked up the glass of colorless liquid which stood before him. He would feel no pain. There might be a slight nausea; then would come drowsiness; then . . . Glancing about the room, he made sure that nothing had been overlooked. Not a page remained of all the manuscripts he had loved, perhaps, too well. In the fireplace, tiny red sparks raced through the brittle fragments of pages which were falling swiftly into impalpable, gray dust.

Caravan proposed a toast: "To Death! may she be more kind than Life." He drank deeply, and following an archaic custom, shattered the glass on the floor. As he waited, his mind went skipping back over many of the lines he had written, and paused on one:

"Merciful sleep, forevermore to dim —"

A shocking thought broke suddenly upon his reverie. Howard had a copy of every line he had written. In his haste to be away, he had forgotten. Fighting back a desire for sleep, he picked up the pen. It was heavy . . . his hand was weighted as with lead.

Summoning all the will which remained, he forced his arm up, up, miles upon endless miles until the pen touched the ink. His hand dropped, but the effort had been sufficient.

"Howard," he scrawled at the end of his letter, "as you love me, destroy every line—"

Sleep rolled over him in a great, quieting flood.

IV.

"The Collected Poems of Michael Caravan" was the literary success of the year. Tawdry best sellers aside, no single work brought such gratifying returns; and the publishers who snatched this choice tidbit from Howard Lorton, the poet's literary executor, justly congratulated themselves on immense business acumen. Not the smallest factor in the success of the volume, was the poignant personal letter printed as a preface. Many were the tears shed by sentimental readers over this outpouring of his soul, in which the author explained to his one friend, the motives which caused him to end his own life.

* * *

The Tropic Screen

BY ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUER

The Western sky is flushed with rose
  After the silver summer rains,
And whirring through the sunset goes
  A sudden swooping flight of cranes.

About the time when shadows fall,
  I made my hungering soul a feast,—
And set against my barren wall
  A little window to the East.

The sober place forgot its gloom;
  I see, as one that newly sees,
The pallid paper of the room
  Is coloured like young almond trees.

And what are these that fade and flow,
  These wings that shimmer from the wall—?
The tram-bells in the street below
  Are like a far-off temple's call.

And there's a glimmer in the dusk,
  A hint of silver and of rose,
A scent of almonds in the husk—
  The grey wings of the flamingoes.

This is my window to the East,
  That opens only to my soul:
I made it for a little feast
  Beside the winter fire of coal.

Its Western sky is flushed with rose
  After the silver summer rains,
And whirring through the sunset goes
  A sudden swooping flight of cranes.

Little Ironies of Literary Life

BY BURTON RASCOE

I

PAUL-MARIE Verlaine was perhaps the greatest lyrical apparition in French literature of the century which produced Hugo and Lamartine, Gautier and Musset, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, Jules Laforgue and Tristan Corbière, Stephane Mallarmé José-Maria de Hérédia. As a music maker he was of the company of Villon and Herrick, of Heine and Edgar Poe. Francois Coppé has said of him that he created "a poetry peculiarly individual, an inspired poetry which is at once naive and subtle, full of nuances, evoking the most delicate vibrations of the nerves, the most fugitive echoes of the heart—a natural poetry, moreover, indeed, almost popular; a poetry where rhyme, both free and broken, preserves a delicious harmony, where trophies twirl and sing like a nursery rondo, where the verse—which remains verse and among the most exquisite—is always musical. And in that inimitable poetry he has given us all his fervor, all his faults, all his remorse, all his tenderness, all his dreams and has revealed to us his soul, so troubled and yet so ingenuous."

That Verlaine was a poverty stricken victim of his gifts and his appetites, a satyric, irresponsible, pitiable and unhappy creature buffeted *au vent mauvais*

Decà, delà
Pareil à la
Feuille mort

from low dram shop to confessional, from prison to bagnio, from alley-ways to charity hospitals we know and the knowledge was common property to all literary Paris of his time. Anatole France once described him thus: *C'est un vieux vagabond, fatigué d'avoir erré trente ans sur tous les chemins. . . . Il surprend, il choque le regard. Il a l'air à la fois farouche et câlin, sauvage et familier. Un Socrate instinctif, ou mieux, un faune, un satyre, un être à demi brute, à demi dieu, qui effraye comme une force naturelle qui n'est soumise à aucune loi connue. . .. . Et Verlaine ressemble à Villon; ce sont deux mauvais garçons à qui il fut donné de dire les plus douces choses du monde.*

. . .

One day, toward the end of his harried life, this old vagabond, plagued by an inconceivable vanity, took it into his head to announce his candidacy for that ornate and ribald sepulchre of mediocre talents, the French Academy. It signified the one thing which was denied him above all—and which he had no need of—respectability. This gravely comic gathering, "directed in everything by petty considerations and wasting its energy in childish tournaments, in which the flatteries that it showers upon others are only a foretaste of the compliments it expects in return for itself" had (to mention only a few) excluded Molière (because he was an actor), Prudhon, Chénier, Constant, Lammennais, Béranger, Stendhal, Balzac, Gautier, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Mau-

passant, Goncourt, and Zola. And yet this old vagabond who had penned the loveliest songs of his generation, nursed the hope that he might enjoy the Academy's dubious benisons, live in better comfort (and with more ample wine) on its meagre pension, and end his days crowned an "immortal" by correct and orthodox rhetoricians, a sterile and emasculate body of well-meaning mutual back-scratchers.

His past, he knew, barred him. He was the "empire at the end of the decadence"; but he inhabited a greasy garret. He had refreshed and enriched French poetry with strange, intimate, ingenious and ingenuous verbal harmonies; but he was often outlandishly drunk. He was the idol and master to a group of talented poets; but he had been imprisoned at Mons. France had produced but one poet who was his lyrical equal; but he had abandoned his wife for a none too savory London adventure with Arthur Rimbaud. . . . Even the thought of Verlaine's occupying an armchair in the Academy would have horrified the prim grammarians and concoctors of pot-boilers who formed that areopagus of arid minds. His child-like habit of pulling up a frayed and dirty trouser to show the interesting coloring of his ulcerated leg would have sent them screaming from the Mazarin Palace.

So we find Verlaine in pathetic humility patching with infinite care the soiled and threadbare legend which covered him that he might appear acceptable in the society of these men, not three of whom were worthy, artistically, of cleaning the grime from his shapeless shoes.

In the defense he wrote after he had filed the declaration of his candidacy with the perpetual secretary of the Academy, we read:

"Unhappily the idea came to Huysmans, in his curious book, *A Rebours,* to compare me, from a literary standpoint, with Villon. From that moment others began to improvise on the theme and, because I was poor and because in those days I had looked misery in the face, though *squarely* in the face, they presumed to speak of me as one whose troubles in life, whose early adventures, and even whose temperament was like that of our great poet of another century and to compare me to him. They dragged into their analogy everything, the jails, the hazy assassinations, even the nameless hovels, even the *grosse Margot.* . . . As to my poverty, it is not sordid; as to my domicile, it is not an almshouse, but a very modest chamber for which I pay dearly enough and regularly; as to the hovel. . . it turns out to be a very respectable, well-furnished hotel" . . .

And so forth, a great and gifted man abasing himself that he might appear the social equal of M. Crapaud, Member of the Academy.

Verlaine's candidacy was not considered.

II

Jules Laforgue's sensitive brain functioned in a fashion unlike that of any other writer who has ever set thoughts to paper. His work has about it a supernal cleverness, a suave and sprightly cynicism, a clownesque and sophisticated disillusion. His verbal patterns

are bizarre and fantastic, luminous and colorful, opalescent and rich in strange but evocative combinations. And beneath this, or with it, are the commentaries and observations of a man who had apparently absorbed all the learning of his period, whose analyses were sure and startling, precise and clinical, who postulated a literary form for the future, whose aesthetic was impeccable —a serene and agile playboy thumbing his nose with exquisite grace at a stupid and astonished world.

Laforgue's work comprises three small volumes; the complete poems; the *Moralités Légendaires;* and a collection of notes and essays published posthumously,—a work which Remy de Gourmont described as "only the prelude of an oratorio achieved in silence," paying thereby a double compliment to Laforgue's magnificent promise of potentialities and to the infinite suggestiveness of what he had already written. . . . Laforgue died of phthisis at the age of twenty-seven.

On a copy of *l'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune,* presented to Paul Bourget who had become casually interested in him and had procured a place as reader to the Empress Augusta (grandmother to the ex-Kaiser) Lafogue wrote: "This is only an intermezzo. Be easy on it, I pray you, and wait for my next book." M. Bourget, thinking perhaps it was another volume of juvenilia by one of the young men who respected his opinion, or perhaps— . . . at all events threw this priceless treasure for bibliophiles among some old papers which later found their way to the stalls of the quay.

III

Joris-Karl Huysmans, with two books, *A Rebours* and *Là-bas* performed the prodigious feat of ushering in, at a critical moment, a new and fascinating form of fiction (that of the *roman de la vie cérébrale)* and of starting an intellectual fashion. These books were the progenitors of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and of *Sixtine,* of *The Hill of Dreams* and of James Huneker's novel, *Painted Veils;* and they set the then young and impressionable George Moore to nursing his ennuis and writing of his pet (hypothetical) python and started the fad which resulted in the *Savoy* and the *Yellow Book* and paved the way for the cleansing mockery of *Les Déliquescences d'Adoré Floupette.*

Since Huysmans' imagination was limited, he did not invent: he merely saw and recorded. The model for Des Esseintes was Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fézensac, that quaint and delightful madman whose originality, Remy de Gourmont said, was excessively tattooed. The model for Durtal was Huysmans himself, and there was not a little of that leaning to the precious and *raffiné* of Des Esseintes in the punctilious clerk in the Ministry of the Interior. *A Rebours* and *Là-bas* were but the crystallization of a tendency that had been long in the air—a tendency in a state of culture which had produced Baudelaire and Rimbaud, Corbière and Mallarmé, Manet and Degas, Gauguin and Van Gogh. It was the tendency of the decadence, which is after all only the phenomenon of a civilization at its apex, a civilization blasé and fatigued, cere-

bral and short of wind. It is the goal of that plagued Sisyphus, humanity, which is eternally seeking leisure from its daily labors and finding only new monotonies.

Huysmans' aethestic instincts were, for the special task of reflecting and representing his era and milieu, profound and selective; his *A Rebours* contains in graphic epitomes what remains today the most subtly apperceptive and sympathetic critiques on the fine arts of that fecund latter-half of the last century. His style was vibrant, sensitive, and personal, equal to any descriptive effort, arresting and savory with unique metaphors and apt but unexpected similes. Once this star had swept into their ken, those migratory impressionists, Symons, Ellis, Ransome, Wilde, Moore, and Huneker were ruined irreparably for larger but less scintillant luminaries nearer home. And the earlier works of Huysmans remain favorites among free minds.

On the personal side Huysmans was no less interesting. He was the most inveterate and complete hater, possibly, in all literature. He loathed or held in contempt his contemporaries almost without exception. His vocabulary of epithet was an unparalleled and flawless instrument for scarifying the unfortunate writers who fell short of his requirements. In a sarcastic, illuminating, and ludicrous phrase he rolled the pompous, the pretentious, the mediocre (and the unquestionably talented) into a little ball and flicked them away. . . . And his ononomania was "betise"; it was the word most frequently upon his lips, which were ordinarily not guilty of repetition. With stupidity he fancied himself ever at war. Had he had the notion that he was sent into this world with a mission, he would, no doubt, have said it was to lay stupidity low and knock imbecilities into a cocked hat. Few, except himself, were to his mind free from the taint. . . .

One evening Huysmans was at a dinner party to which Edouard Dubus, a critic and minor poet, had been invited. In the party also was Remy de Gourmont, who indeed, had been responsible for the meeting. Dubus had learned as a parlor accomplishment, much as another might take up elocution or slight-of-hand, various mediumistic tricks. Ventriloquism and a practiced big-toe, no doubt, were among his accessories. He was a sardonic and entertaining fellow who never gave himself away. At the party he was called upon to perform. He made a table move and cut capers common to seances. He evoked the spirits of various dead. At one point a summoned spirit anounced that he was Camille de Sainte-Croix, the clever critic and novelist. (As a matter of fact Sainte-Croix was not dead). The *disembodied ghost* of a man who was still alive and well, answered numerous questions and, when he was interrogated as to his literary tastes, declared that he valued the work of Huysmans above that of all other men. Huysmans, who up to this time had regarded the proceedings with a half-incredulous mien, at once became profoundly interested. He called for more. The shades of various illustrious literary men attested to the supremacy of Huysmans in the world of letters. Huysmans' justly famous cat-like eyes became like saucers. He was insatiable. Poor

Dubus acquitted himself well, but in time grew weak and weary. His toes, no doubt, ached and his throat pained. He offered a *piéce de résistance,* the table dancing a jig, and turned on the lights.

The next day Remy de Gourmont called upon Huysmans. He found the author of *Là-bas* in a gravely preoccupied mood. No sooner had Gourmont entered the room than Huysmans said, in a voice of funereal dignity, "There can be no question that the table last night was moved by spirits. This fact demonstrates at once the immortality of the soul and the existence of God." Gourmont was so astonished he could not utter a word; and as Huysmans elaborated upon the the circumstances, Gourmont sat petrified with incredulous amazement at Huysmans' being so completely taken in. Huysmans declared he had seen God in the dancing table, just as Moses had seen God in the burning bush. Gourmont left him without offering any objections.

A few days later Huysmans left Paris for a retreat in a Trappist monastery. Thus came about the famous conversion of the great satanist and describer of the obscene Black Mass (which, by the way, he had never attended).

IV

Anatole France and Remy de Gourmont are, I am pleased to consider, among the most emancipated intelligences the world has produced. Their sound reason and sanity stand out distinctly in a world of stupidities, hopeless muddling, confusion of issues, wrong emphasis, duplicity, hypocrisy, sentimentality, intolerance, and petty vanities. They were contemporaries, until 1915, when Remy de Gourmont died at his desk of a cerebral hemorrhage—the very death he had attributed to the journalist in *Une Nuit au Luxembourg.* They were almost neighbors. Gourmont inhabited a modest apartment lined with books on the fourth floor in the rue des Saints Pères, a short distance from the *Mercure de France* of which he was the brain; Anatole France makes his home in the magnificent and richly furnished Villa Said on the outskirts of Paris.

They were both ironic skeptics, "working the same side of the street" with incredible unconcern with each other: only once in his volume of work does France mention Gourmont—in a cursory review in the *Temps* of Gourmount's small study of the Latin poetry of the middle-ages; and Gourmont repays the compliment by referring most casually to France only four times, I think, in his great body of critical work.

France, by a trick of fate, achieved world renown and a popular success. His royalties are enormous considering the nature and excellence of his work. He has been burdened with honors. Remy de Gourmont remained until his death a man known only to a few select and appreciative minds. He subsisted upon the sparse royalties of his numerous books and upon his advising editorship at the *Mercure.*

These peers in the realm of thought met only twice—shortly before Gourmont's death. Mutual admirers had endeavored to bring them together. Finally André Rouveyre the artist visited France with this purpose in view.

He brought Gourmont's name into the conversation. France expressed a desire to meet him and asked Rouveyre to bring him to Villa Said. Rouveyre was dubious about suggesting to the proud hermit of the Rue des Saints Pères that he discommode himself to make a pilgrimage to France, the universal celebrity and member of the Academy. He told Edouard Champion of France's invitation and Champion took upon himself to escort Gourmont to Villa Said.

France paid his guest several polite compliments and talked at random, apropos of nothing, on erudite subjects. Gourmont, who was ill at ease in the presence of others and who was afflicted with an impediment of the speech which made talking difficult, said little. The visit was brief. Gourmont was overjoyed when France accepted his invitation to visit him in return.

Not long after France repaid the courtesy, Rouveyre was in Gourmont's apartment. The philosopher and poet was still vain over the fact that France had visited him. With a slow voice, swelling with pride, Gourmont said, as if speaking of a god: "He came to see me . . . He sat there . . . in that very chair you are now occupying."

* * *

Oblivion

BY OSCAR WILLIAMS

If one should ask when I am gone,
"Why do his poems stir and dream
Like shadows when the stars are sweeping
Their silver music down a stream?"—

If one should speak, so, tell him this:
"The stars were burning in his brain
As fixedly as in the heavens,
And held as beauty in the rain."

If one should question, tell him this:
"The stars were luminous gazing eyes
Leaning above the pool of darkness,
Looking for him beneath the skies.

They came to him through fog, through sleep,
Through all the vast, deep loneliness of space,
How could he let them go unanswered
While beauty lifted up her face!"

The Story Writer Proposes

BY FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

"I WISH you'd propose," she said, peevishly, looking away from the semi-bald swain, who was holding her to his breast according to the most approved manner of romancers.

"I'm doing it, or, rather," he corrected himself, "I'm leading up to it. It comes in the next paragraph. My only trouble—"

"Well?" she queried, when the pause had grown uncomfortably long.

"My only trouble, " he repeated, "is that I'm not quite sure as to the style I ought to do it in."

"You ought to know, if anybody does," she retorted, "you make your living by selling love stories."

"Writing them!" he corrected. "But that's just the point. Sad experience has taught me that I can't sell a story to an editor unless the love-making is in the style he personally approves. Surely, in real life, where a lot more is involved, one ought to be as well posted in a girl's notions as in an editor's. If I knew which were your favorite magazines?" he ventured.

"I like different ones," the girl answered. "The *Ladies Home Journal,* the *Masses,* the *Scientific American,* the —"

"Why don't you add the *Police Gazette* and the *Journal of Animal Behavior?*" he queried plaintively. "Do you call that, giving a chap a clue? What kind of a mental mixture are you, Mary, any way?"

"You asked which ones I liked," she retorted, "and I told you."

"But which?" he persisted. "How can I propose in all those styles? I'll try, of course, if you like."

He waited for a reply, but receiving none, continued:

"I suppose I could propose to you in *Ladies Home Journal* style, something like this, perhaps:

" 'Seizing the fateful moment towards which the stars in their courses had been leading him—ever notice how fond Bok is of stars in their courses?—he gulped down his rising emotion, and, facing her manfully, as a man faces the woman he truly loves, blurted out—' "

"No!" she cried, wriggling out of his arms, not too far, however, so that she could nestle down again, "that won't do at all. Besides, they don't talk like that in the *Ladies Home Journal.*"

"My dear lady, you mistake," he corrected her, "I sold 'em a story which had that very sentence in it, the one about 'facing her manfully,' etcetera."

The proposee sniffed scornfully. (Why not propose?)

"On the other hand," he continued, "you said you like the *Masses.* A proposal in their pages would go something like this:

" 'I know, Mary,' he said, 'that a capitalistic society regards the love of an honest man as a paltry thing unless it is decked in the disguise of frenzied superiority, but I, Mary, I, who have

faced unmurmuringly the mad mouths of a murderous moralism—' "

"Nonsense!" quoth she, "I'm sure the *Masses* never published such stuff as that!"

"No," he agreed, sadly, "they didn't. They saw the alliteration of that last phrase and sent it back to me with the remark that they were fed upon vers libre. They didn't know it was prose."

"Perhaps it wasn't," she snapped back.

"You may be right, Mary, you may be right," the story writer agreed. "Now, as for the *Scientific American*," he continued, warming to his subject, "I'm not one of the family over there, and I've never tried to break in with fiction, but I should imagine this would be their style:

" 'In the upper left quadrant of the thorax, the driving mechanism is a four-chambered pump, comparable, in some respects, to a four-cycle Otto engine The gas of her charm being duly vaporized and drawn into his heart, the contraction of the left ventricle, comparable, again, to the up-stroke of the piston, compressed his emotions to the expansive force of several atmospheres, and the appropriate moment, acting as a spark-plug, he —' "

"You needn't continue," she said stiffly, "it's always tiresome to hear a man talk when he thinks he is being clever. And you needn't rack your brains to try and think up proposals in the style of the *Police Gazette* or the *Journal of Animal Behavior*, either! Haven't you any ideas of your own, except what you have put into stories?"

"Good Lord, no," he answered readily, "I haven't enough for the stories, alone. Nobody has. Why, every little idea I ever possessed has had to do duty in half a dozen stories, at least, some of them, more. Of course, if I were to follow my own feelings—I always was lazy—I'd propose in a different way entirely."

"How?"

"I'd say—'Mary, marry me'."

"Is that your real proposal?"

"That's the real one," he said, "but you see how useless it would be from the story point of view, no atmosphere, no description, no nothing! Even at two cents a word that would only be six cents."

Mary sat up perfectly straight, with an air of relief.

"So that's your proposal," she said. "I'm glad to have it, because you've been making it hard for me for some time. A girl can't say 'No' to a proposal she hasn't had. I wanted you to propose, Billy, so as to get it out of the way. It's 'no,' of course, and if you want to know why, it's because I'm going to marry Bob Alboys next month."

He looked at her with lack-lustre eyes.

"I suppose," he said, "I ought to tear my hair a la *Cosmopolitan*, or go out sadly in the waning afternoon, as the *Delineator* would have me do, or put a bullet through Bob's brain, in the spirit of *Adventure*. But, Mary, since it happents to be the truth, I'll make a *Smart Set* ending and murmur to you softly:

" 'So glad you refused me, Mary, for I married Lily yesterday.' "

Have We a Literary Capital?

BY LLEWELLYN JONES

ALTHOUGH New York and Boston are not as yet, one imagines, disturbed over the matter, it is rather interesting that within a few months of the time when Mr. H. L. Mencken declared that Chicago was the literary capital of America the *Double Dealer* should announce itself as a national magazine from the South.

There is a challenge in this that is worth considering. I have always had a private suspicion that Mr. Mencken's famous remark about Chicago was not correctly quoted. Rather I reconstruct the incident something after this fashion. As the famous critic reaches his destination and ascertains that the train has really stopped because it has reached Chicago—and not merely Niles, Michigan, or some such minor place—he gets off the car, and firmly planting his foot upon Chicago soil declares: Chicago is *now* the literary capital of America.

And it might not be an exaggeration at that to say that wherever two or three good authors are gathered together and Mencken comes into the midst of them, that his advent would sufficiently tip the balance to make that spot the center of literary gravity for the time being.

And in Chicago we undoubtedly have the two or three authors. And we have our so-called "school" of poetry. So why should we not, with Mr. Mencken's reported encouragement, lay claim to being the capital of literary America?

For my own part I think that there are a number of weighty reasons. For a capital in the full sense of the word there should be not only the habitats of the best authors but there should be the publishing centers—and Chicago is not in it with either New York or Boston as a publishing center. And there should be traditions, and both the East and the South have more literary tradition than the Middle West.

Our premier novelist, of course, is Sherwood Anderson. His work is notable for its psychological realism, but hardly for its artistic form. In fact it is not doing him an injustice to say that he despises artistic form. None of his novels is in my opinion as good as his book of short stories, "Winesburg, Ohio". Anderson has a natural aptitude for the short sketch. When it comes to the novel his aptitude carries him for a certain length; then the point is reached where art is necessary; where the story no longer unrolls but must be built—and the reader can usually see just when that point has been reached in Mr. Anderson's work.

If we were to discuss Chicago as a center of novel writing we could make out a good case for the contention that it was many years ago that Chicago was at its relative best. For in the 'nineties when Henry B. Fuller was writing his earlier realistic stories and Hamlin Garland was at the height of his fame Chicago was making an enviable name for itself—but in those days there was

no Henry L. Mencken to advertise the fact.

In discussing the question today the most instructive approach is through poetry. For in Chicago we have two of the best known American poets, Edgar Lee Masters and Carl Sandburg; we have the ever active magazine, *Poetry,* edited by Miss Harriet Monroe, herself well known as a poet; we have Eunice Tietjens who has followed her two volumes of verse, "Profiles from China" and "Body and Raiment" with a poetic novel, "Jake" recently reviewed in these columns; we have Alice Corbin Henderson, a Chicago poet although she is now residing in Santa Fe, New Mexico; we have Mark Turbyfill's original talent; while not far from us, in Springfield, there is Vachell Lindsay, poet and Utopian, with a mind and soul saturated with Middle West idealism, and in Davenport, Iowa, only a short distance from us, there is Arthur Davison Ficke,

Only the more "radical" of these writers, however, give their influence and its name to "the Chicago school" and the name is hardly an enviable one. Indeed one of its cardinal tenets appears to be that the less you know about a subject the better work you can do in it. The most explicit apostle of this view is Mr. Sherwood Anderson. We have spoken of him as a novelist. The reader may be surprised to hear that in the few short years since he wrote his first novel he has also produced work—and sold it—in the mediums of poetry and painting.

His poetry was first published in Miss Monroe's magazine, and then in a book by the John Lane Company, and it is supposed to be in free verse. Incidentally I may say that most free verse is written by people who quite misunderstand what regular verse it. They think it is a rigidly patterned, artificial method which cramps the writer's originality. So far is this from being the case that the great difficulty of the free verse writer is to avoid writing regular verse by accident. This difficulty Mr. Anderson has been quite unable to avoid. His book of poems is called "Mid-American Chants," and here is a sample quotation:

Forgotten Song.

"Always at the kitchen door the gaunt
wolf stands.
Grey wolf—old wolf—evil and old—
Keep ever thy hungry gleaming eyes,
Thy fangs to kill
Thy heart of hate.
Now my brother infallible, stay in the
darkness there.
"Long, long ago, when days were new,
Fresh born of cornfields, undefiled,
Under the moon
They fought at night,
Into his body the wolf-love, won in the
darkness there . . ."

There are five more stanzas, but these will do for analysis. In the first place, taking the content alone, we see that it is improvization rather than worked out poetry. Is it the days, in the second stanza which are fresh-born of corn-fields or were the days merely new, and was it "Man" fresh born of cornfields who, undefiled, fought the wolf? And throughout the poem there are ejaculations which not being reduced to grammatical subordination, do not make sense.

And what can we say of the form? It is certainly not free verse nor is it

ordered verse, although each line is in itself in one of the regular metres. In fact, taking each line in its order we have the following metres represented: 1, Four beat quadruple metre or can be read trochaically. 2, The same, with pauses instead of some of the syllables. The two lines at least keep step with each other. 3, Here we abruptly change to a four beat iambic, followed by 4 and 5, Each a two beat iambic. Then in 6 we return to a six beat line in falling rhythm. But a more violent wrench comes when we begin the second stanza with the very same iambic lilt as that one time favorite, "In days of old when knights were bold" which runs right through until we reach the last line ("Under the moon they fought at night" being metrically one line) when we return to our six beat line.

But free verse ought not to be a hodge-podge of ordinary metres.

It is in connection with painting however that Mr. Anderson has boldly announced his theory: that technique is quite unnecessary to art. He exhibited a number of paintings in Chicago and in New York—and sold some at that—and in a circular letter he described how he was led, by the emotions aroused when he saw a certain sea-scape, to paint. The call to paint came as a purely emotional one and it was instantly obeyed. He had no technique and he did not paint to represent objects—but simply used color and abstract form to express his emotions. When the emotion is strong enough, says Anderson, all you have to do is to let it guide your brush. A captivating theory, but is it a true one? Certainly, if it is, true artists waste a great deal of time in learning to draw. But then, if it were true for one art it ought to be true for all. I advise the reader to try the experiment of putting a very emotional but musically uneducated person in front of a piano!

What we really have, then, in Mr. Anderson's verse and in his painting, and we have it largely in Miss Monroe's acceptance of free verse from all sorts of picturesque, but uneducated people for publication in her magazine, is naivete erected into a theory of art and made the criterion. When I first criticized Mr. Anderson's poetry he wrote me a letter of acknowledgment in which he said that I was a "dear old pedant". And I am sure he would call the art instructors of Chicago pedants.

But as long as art is art—for, as Goethe said, art is called art because it is not nature—we must have not only the nature, the *élan vital,* but this other element which Anderson calls pedantry.

And the trouble with the Chicago school is that that it lacks it. But all Chicago writers do not belong to the Chicago school. The trouble is that when we erect Chicago into a literary capital we take the most typically West ern writers as our excuse for so doing. What we ought to do is not to talk in terms of a literary capital but in terms of a literary center of gravity or center of population. In that case we can see how the center has progressively shifted. First it was in London—for early America was frankly colonial in its literary life. Then it was New York and Boston, with the influence of the South pulling upon it rather steadily. Now the Middle West asserts its pull,

and as I began by saying the advent of *The Double Dealer* pulls it nearer the South. When the Pacific coast recovers from its weather and its absurd spirit of commercial boosting, something may come from there, but at present the local Pacific coast poetry published in books often absurdly decorated does not augur anything very much from that quarter. Bohemian Clubs cannot produce literature—although we must not forget that Gertrude Atherton is a Californian.

For my own part I think the South is going to have more to say than she has yet said. She has the background that encourages literature; she has besides the *Double Dealer* at least one scholarly and literary magazine of unusual merit —the *Sewanee Review*—and although I do not know how many poets she has I do know that she has one of fine achievement and greater promise: William Alexander Percy, the author of "Sappho in Levkas" and "In April Once."

What we should hope is that our literary center should still shift as section after section of our yet inarticulate country becomes self-conscious and sings and creates. And in aiding that growing self-consciousness we shall be rendering the artist the greatest of all services—providing him with an audience. For that is the one thing that the serious American artist most tragically lacks.

* * *

Arrangement in Black and Gold

New Orleans, 1821.

BY WALTER McCLELLAN

The lovely Portuguese is dead,
Tall candles burn about her head.
Her negro slave, Lili-Alixe,
Prays with an ivory crucifix.
Until strange men knock on the door,
And walk upon the painted floor . . .
O men who bear this poor dead woman
Unto that place where nothing's human,
Behold your shadows this noon day
And know that she is less than they.
Rejoice that these black phantoms move,
Your living presences to prove:
Yourselves that still the heavy sun
Finds here alive, and shines upon.

Pigeons on the Beach

BY PADRAIC COLUM

Pigeons that have flown from the courts behind the orchards; pigeons that run along the beach to take sand into your crops, what contrast there is between you, birds of a rare stock, and the waves that know only the buccaneer sea gulls and the sand marten emigrants. And what contrast there is between your momentary wildness here and your graces in the courtyards above!

You rise up and fly five wave lengths from the beach. And now a strange element is under you—the green, tumbling untried sea. With that half-remembered element below you, maybe you think of rocky breeding places and of strong mates. Bravely you hang above the untried, alluring sea,—just five wave lengths out.

You remind me of the ladies who came to the gypsy carts that were on the beach yesterday and swore that they would take to the gypsy ways.

But you stay no longer above the waves. Round you turn and alight on the hard sand again.

And now you run along by the waves taking more grains of sand into your crops.

A wave break startles you. You take to your wings again. But now you see the dove-cotes beyond the orchards and you fly towards them.

And all night long you will hear the sea breaking and you will dream, maybe, in the dove-cotes of strong mates and rocky breeding places.

At dawn you will fly down to the beach again, run along the hard sand, take grains into your crops, and fly five wave lengths from the beach.

The sand martens will have left their holes, and you will see them gathered in flocks on the sand-heights, the dusty gypsies.

And you will not notice when they have departed, going without afterthoughts over that green alluring element, the sea.

A Book Hunter in New Orleans

BY GIDEON TOWNSEND STANTON

"Life's short hours too fast are hasting—
Sweet amours cannot be lasting."

OF books I speak. I have loved them from the time when as a little boy I listened to stories of great doings and called for more. There were bookcases throughout the house, downstairs and up, in the library and halls, even in the parlor. In all, there were rows upon rows of books, short, tall, thick, thin, with and without illustrations. Of bindings there was a great variety from the plainest of cloth to embossed morocco. One Christmas I sent an urgent request to Santa Claus for a bookcase all my own and the good man sent it me. Soon its shelves were filled, G. A. Henty occupying all of one and in company were Kirk Monroe, Thomas Nelson Page, Howard Pyle and Stevenson. Of course there were others whom I don't recall. One of these books I loaned to a friend and it came back to me its pages soiled and its reverse cover scarred by the circular mark of a drinking glass. The book was of no intrinsic value, merely a juvenile, but I felt its damage as to this day I feel a sadness over a mutilated page or cover or a set with a missing volume.

As the years passed the number of my books increased, their character changed and they were of a maturer membership. I gathered gradually here and there, a few coming as gifts from friends, many from nooks and corners the result of saunterings with an open eye.

Here, in New Orleans, the number of bookshops is meagre and some that existed have long disappeared. My first recollection is of Wharton's where, on frequent trips with my grandmother, I was given the run of the place and permitted by the kindly proprietor to look within the covers to my heart's content. You recall José Delgado who died about ten years ago? A little rotund man with a bald head and a courteous manner befitting a native of Sunny Spain. The front of the shop was presided over by Staub and his magazines. In the rear at a little desk sat José puffing at a cigarette, at his elbow a tray containing the ashes of many others. Through the smoke rings loomed obscurely the dingy backs of his stock in trade. Most of the books were in Spanish but I remember having seen a set of Ireland's "Life of Napoleon" with the Cruikshank colored plates and I have always wondered into whose hands it fell. There was also a bibliography of Don Quixote in two volumes with facsimile titlepages of the many editions. José and I had many a pleasant chat and though my shelves contain nothing from his shop but a set of Moliere, I recall him with pleasure.

In Poydras Street Mrs. Jacobs kept a shop of books in some profusion. I think she also kept a parrot, but if so, I recall no speaking acquaintance with the bird. Quite a number of my books have come from here, for her prices were not only reasonable but markedly so when purchases were made in bulk.

I have beside me a little volume called "Under A Fool's Cap," Songs by Daniel Henry Jun., London, Kegan, Paul, Trench and Co., 1884, with the inscription on the forepage "For dear Alice from the Sister of the Poet, G. H. T., Xmas 1900." This is the edition that was printed entire in the beautiful format of the Mosher Press. I have a letter from Mr. Mosher in which he has kindly informed me in reference to this edition. "It is a very scarce book as you may readily understand. I got hold of two copies, one in London and the other in Cincinnati, and yours the 3rd., is the only one I have heard about although of course there must be others scattered far and near." It is of local interest that the aforementioned Daniel Henry Jun., was the son of D. H. Holmes, the founder of the great department store that bears his name. From Mrs. Jacobs I also secured one of a celebrated series of sporting novels by R. S. Surtees, "Ask Mamma, or the Richest Commoner in England," with illustrations, some colored, by John Leech, London, Bradbury and Evens, 1858, for the sum of fifty cents. Another frequent caller at her shop was Mr. William Beer, a most indefatigable seeker after hidden treasure who always made me feel I had come just too late. His specialty is Americana and in those days in this class of books, especially Louisiana, there were good pickings.

When Mrs. Jacobs retired I drifted for a while and then sought Royal Street. Here, in the heart of the old French Quarter I found a doorway flanked by showcases full of books; I entered and after becoming accustomed to the semi-twilight I saw in a chair a slim little man with a pale and narrow face and eye still bright, though gone the crackle of a glance that in youth must have been there. This was Monsieur Julien who, today grown more remote is the surviving spirit of the old quarter. He is gentle of voice and impresses one with his detachment of being as though arrested by the atmosphere of the books of a by-gone day. In former years he made periodical trips to Europe bringing back with him choice items for his stock and as frequently strangers visited him many are the private collections that have gained thereby.

Approaching within a few years of today I find myself again in Poydras Street in the queer little shop and dwelling place of Michael Lynch. What a contrast here! A man of great size and weight, broad of girth and full of face, beardlessness accentuating cheek and jowl. The head is bald but always covered by a cap. Frequently Mr. Lynch makes trips for stock, returning with a well filled sack upon his shoulder, and here's where his bulk is handy for no man of ordinary proportions could walk for blocks with a big sack full of books. Fortunately I have been present at the end of these hunting forays when the contents were dumped upon the floor. Frankly, my friend, I now have a reverence for sacks for I have seen some very nice books pour out. It is not always potatoes that come from sacks! Whilst I would look over the books with a puppy or kitten playing at my heels, Lynch would seat himself, fill his black pipe and between short puffs begin to talk; often it was on some topic of the day, an author or an article lately read;

once in a while it would be the reading of some original verses, and if the former it was of interest, and if the latter they were by no means without merit. Lynch has travelled, moreover he has rubbed shoulders with the crowd and nothing humanizes more. Lynch moved some few years ago and now he and his books are literally tucked in between an auto supply house and a restaurant on a busy street, in the shadow of the postoffice, and facing Lafayette Square. Lynch is Elizabethan.

Returning to Royal Street I must not fail to mention Alexander Hay, formerly an architect, and now the proprietor of an antique shop wherein books are incidental to the ebb and flow of a wonderful variety of stuff. Hay not only may be seen any hour of the day but I might say of the night as well. I have wandered in late of an evening and have been rewarded for so doing. The hunter soon learns that a dozen visits may be unavailing but the thirteenth will suffice for all. It was on one of these nocturnal flying visits that I secured a thin volume bound in black cloth with the Mexican eagle stamped in gold and the title "Cortez the Conqueror—A Tragedy," by Louis F. Thomas, Washington, D. C., 1857. It was the inscription on the foreleaf that caught my eye: "Major G. T. Beauregard, from Gen'l. John A. Quitman, Natchez, Miss., July 11th, 1857." The book is dedicated to General Quitman and but for the inscription I am aware of no especial value. A first edition of Clarke's "Ten Great Regilious" contains the signature of Charles J. Bonaparte. From him have come several interesting books on Louisiana and New Orleans; Dubroca's "L'Itineraire des Francais dans la Louisiane," Paris, 1802, containing a map of Louisiana and the English Colonies by Guillaume Delisle, dated 1782, ludicrously large for the little volume but with every indication of having been originally bound in: An Act to Incorporate the Town of Carrollton, passed by the Legislature of Louisiana in the year 1845; Ordinances, Resolutions and Permanent Orders of the Town of Carrollton, La., Carrollton 1855: the Ordinances and Resolutions of the Town of Carrollton, compiled by order of the Mayor and Council, by C. C. Porter, Lafayette, 1850. Another volume of nineteen different pamphlets includes "Rules and Regulations Established by the Orleans Navigation Company for the Government and Police of Vessels and Boats Navigating the Bayou St. John, Canal of Carondelet and Basin, New Orleans; Ben. Levy, 1825, with English and French texts on opposite pages. Items such as these are altogether of local interest, possessing considerable historical value.

"The Olde Booke Shoppe" was established in Royal Street about two years ago. It is a snug, tight-fitting little place requiring a brevity of search for one to become familiar with the contents of its shelves. John McClure is the proprietor. A writer of distinction, he is primarily a poet whose verse has a rare quality that lingers long and mellow after the page is closed.

Life and Sleep

BY J. VANDERVOORT SLOAN

I like the world so much it seems not right
  That I should ever sleep—
  I have a tryst to keep
With life by day and night.
There are such great adventures that I might
  Miss finding, if into the heap
  Of cushioned dreams I let myself sink deep—
I want both darkness and the light.
When blue night has her stars pinned on
  Or moonlit night makes stars and sky seem pale,
  And dew is on the grass—a fairy's veil—
And trees stretch out their arms like phantoms wan,
  I want the night. But after that is done
  I want the sun.

* * *

Riders in the Dust

BY CHARLOTTE HARDIN

How far from touching of the hands of kin
Were the great early giants of the world
For whom the vaster life but half-unfurled
Revealed its secret visioning within.
Their groping fingers found but dreams to spin
And from the flaming essences of thought
A blurred prophetic shadowing was wrought—
A pattern bright with love and dark with sin.

Dante and Milton—shadow-spinners all!
Had you no glimpses of a vaster day,
No forecast of a wider clarity
When a new sunlight on the earth should fall
And giant-broods, weary of shadow-play,
Should carve their dreams in clear reality?

Paris Letter

BY ALFRED KREYMBORG

THIS noon, the good ship Rotterdam stopped in mid-ocean, and many of us who were in a hurry to get away from America, or to reach Europe, were visibly annoyed. It so happened that we were at dinner, and our annoyance quickly evaporated before the prospect of the next course—and the courses to follow—for the sea appetite is the most ravenous and the least quickly satisfied. The ship stopped for an hour, and if this letter is an hour late in reaching its destination in far-away New Orleans, the fault is not mine, nor even the ship's, so much as it is to be charged to the action of a man in the steerage. No, one must go even further in the search for the culprit, back to the crowded Dutch pier in Hoboken, to the man, woman or child who robbed the man in the steerage of his laboured, hoarded savings, many years old. The ship stopped an hour because of the search, futile in this case, made for the man's body. He was last seen lifting the sign of the cross before jumping overboard, and the water, marvelously calm this July day, quietly closed over his dream, whatever it was. There was considerable excited comment—I will say that for us—when the news travelled from table to table—but after all, he was not one of ours, and except for the romantic thrill at so cheap a price it gave some of us to have a man drown himself from a ship on which we were sailing—the ship ours, and each one of its happenings ours—to be set down in our diaries, or letters home—there was little to be gained on a pleasure jaunt like ours from horrible thoughts, so the horrible thoughts had to be submerged with the same gesture, if possible, with which the sea brushes down its jetsam.

* * *

Paris, July 4.

Shortly after my arrival in Paris, I tried to register at a small, out-of-the-way hotel in the Rue Jacob. I say tried, advisedly. I was in fact interrupted by the sight of two letters lying near the register addressed to gentlemen whose names and persons are familiar to me; Sherwood Anderson and Paul Rosenfeld, I was so dazed by the coincidence that I had to cling to that nearest and ever ready bromide, concerning the infinitesimal size of the infinite, to guide me out of my amazement. I had seen these two gentlemen two months before in New York. We had planned—since the whole of the American art world, or nearly the whole, was on its way to Europe—to meet somewhere in Paris, the actual rendezvous to be left to destiny. And here they were—or rather, nay and alas, were not. For the landlady assured me that the gentlemnen had left for London the day before. And Paris seemed a little greyer for their departure, and my sly anticipation of secretly enjoying the effect of Paris on Winesburg, Ohio, was grievously disappointed. Later, I was consoled with the news that the pair had success-

fully negotiated the translation into French of a book each—"Mid-Western Chants" and "Musical Portraits." And that Sherwood expects to publish "Winesburg, Ohio," and "Poor White" in London. And I was no longer entirely sorry the twain had escaped me.

The same afternoon, while entrusting my timid feet and dazed brain to a first encounter with the boulevards, I met Robert McAlmen of "Contract" fame (vide the "*Dial*" of July). He conducted me to the house of James Joyce. The much discussed Dubliner was in no condition to discuss anything, least of all himself. We found him sitting in a dark room, with two pairs of glasses over his eyes. He is suffering agonies due to an infection of the right eye. But the man is game. Despite our protest, he stuck to the gaff of gossip for an hour. During which I was advised of the happy item that "Ulysses," after being four times suppressed in the *Little Review* and being unanimously rejected by American and British publishers, is coming out in book form in Paris in the autumn under the imprint of Shakespeare & Co., 8 Rue Dupuytren. The edition is, of course, private, and will be limited to one thousand copies. It will be a 600 page affair divided into editions to be sold at 150, 250 and 350 francs per copy, which, at the present rate of exchange, is equivalent to 12, 20 and 28 dollars.

Cousin Ezra was not far away. I found him in the happy throes of being translated into French (quite the pastime now-a-days) by a certain Monsieur Llena, who is also translating three of the novels of Theodore Dreiser. You see, one isn't far from home in Paris. I had a three-hour session with the expatriate who so persistently and bitterly pounds America. He is a formidable antagonist on the ground, but not invulnerable. Many of the quips he indulges might just as readily be directed at London or Paris. I had never met him in the flesh, although we have corresponded intermittently for the last eight years. He knows as little about present day America as an Indo-Chinaman, and if he knew more, would not acknowledge it. On the other hand, he is a battler, an infighter, a religious fanatic in behalf of the fellow artists he believes in—just now, Joyce, Eliot and Lewis and the yougner Frenchmen, Jean Cocteau and the Vadas—as he was formerly the spokesman of the verticists and before then of the Imagists. I had the honour of publishing the anthology Cousin Ezra edited, the first collection of its kind, in the "Globe" now defunct. He is to have a new book in the autumn to be published by Boni and Liveright.

The same evening, thanks to the courtesy of the editor of one of the new French periodicals, "L'Amour de L'Art" I retired to a small maison, where I was greeted with another shock, this one sufficient to force me to an early couch. An inoffensive, commonplace restaurant, but at a very small table scarcely large enough to accomodate four little humans, sat three huge gentlemen: Messieurs Braque, Derain and Satie. I was presented to the trio and they were like everybody here, most cordial. I enjoyed the secret satisfaction of studying their surprise when they were advised that their work is "bien connu" in America. The truth is, I've heard piano pieces by Eric Satie

in remote corners of the States; while Fifth Avenue has been acquainted with the paintings of Derain and Braque for nearly ten years. Andre Derain looks physically able to avenge the defeat of Carpentier at the hands of Dempsey. Derain is huge. He was wounded during the late unpleasantness, and simply had to be cared for, as his wife stated the case. "They will never dig a grave deep enough to bury Andre in." And so he stands, with Picasse and Matisse, at the head of French painting to-day. Eric Satie looks like a Gallic edition of Bernard Shaw. Nevertheless, if one didn't catch glimpses of his roguish eyes—so mild and couteous in his manner one might mistake him for a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne. And yet he is probably the foremost comedian in the domain of music, Daumier reincarated in sound.

One's second day in Paris resembled one's first. One encountered Tristan Tzara, the founder of Dadaism, as well as two of the leading exponents, Francis Picabia and Jean Cocteau (the present favorite of the boulevards), not to mention Albert Gleizes, the cubist who has painted memorable impressions of New York, and Marcel Duchamp, just returned from the same city and known to us Americans for the "Nude Descending the Stairway." And one heard rumors that Mr. Thayer of the *Dial* is due to-morrow and Marsden Hartley, 5,000 dollars richer for the sale of his paintings at auction, on Wednesday, and Man Ray, the New York Dada, on Thursday, and so on.

But these gentlemen require the effort of another letter. Besides, I'm already exhausted with impressions. And pray I haven't exhausted you in the process of transcription. *Garçon, une autre, s'il vous plait!*

* * *

The Rose

BY PAUL ELDRIDGE

My body was mercilessly crushed
In the long and passionate embrace
Of two lovers.
Generations of roses have blossomed and withered
But my soul lives on,
Vague and shapeless,
In the pinched nostrils
Of the old woman.
Is this the meaning of immortality?

Chicago Letter

BY VINCENT STARRETT

WE are in the thick of another circulation campaign undertaken by a morning newspaper, which has stolen a march on its competitors by hiring jobless ex-service men to canvass the residence districts for subscriptions. Daily the doorbell rings and a doughboy on the doorstep advertises his presence, his past, and his immediate purpose, in "a few well-chosen words," to borrow a phrase beloved of the women's clubs. It is supposed to be, and undoubtedly is, a shameful thing that these fellows have been denied employment, and are actually needy, many of them, and the morning newspaper makes the most of the situation. It makes no secret of the fact that it is doing a very fine thing indeed in paying them a salary instead of a commission, and as the cause of the ex-service man is one that makes a wide public appeal, the response of the public has been generous and the circulation of the morning newspaper is advancing by leaps and bounds.

Nevertheless, the shrewd exploitation of these men and their war records to the end that a certain newspaper shall be glorified is a typical and vicious piece of journalistic enterprise. The attitude of the rival journals is interesting. Undoubtedly they would like to speak their minds editorially, but the situation is sufficiently delicate to enforce silence. The same inhibition, indeed, checks my own utterance, for I hold much sympathy and admiration for the men of the war; yet for the newspaper, while I fully recognize the benefits accruing to its soldier-canvassers, I can find only a sort of admiring contempt.

But the whole business of circulation campaigns, with its tiresome contests and prize offers and coupons, begins mightily to disgust. In recent months the beauty contests, the limerick contests, the "Write a Title" contests, the puzzle games, and all the rest of the depressing manifestations of newspaper intelligence (and of human intelligence as viewed by the newspapers) have filled the journals *ad nauseam,* and threaten to continue indefinitely. Many of the magazines are as bad as the newspapers. Twenty-five dollars for the best letter on Polygamy, on Fidelity, on Perfect Love, on the Care of Infants. "My Most Embrassing Moment" . . . "How I Proposed to My Husband" . . . "The Ideal Love Letter" . . . "The Happiest Moment of My Life" . . . "Why I Admire Dimples" . . .

The childishness of it all is insulting, only the simple-minded victim does not know it. The invitation to falsehood is, of course, obvious, which is unimportant save that no really brilliant lie ever results. Suppose some cynical and disgusted male were to tell the truth in one of these contests!

* * *

Oscar Williams, the poet, has come to live in Chicago, and is at present happily employed in Kroch's International Bookstore. He is slight and slim. His hair has a permanent wave. He wears spectacles. He is very young. He writes excellent poetry. He argues

ferociously. He does not like chop suey. His favorite contemporary is John Masefield. He passes his Sunday afternoons with the Bookfellows. He smokes cigarettes. He admires the stars. He has published in *The Double Dealer*.

Last month he published a group of poems in *Poetry: a Magazine of Verse*, and in the same issue he published also a signed review of several volumes of poems by other poets. The review was entitled, happily, "The Silver Stallion." Mr. Williams began by saying: "Wading through these young first books reminded me of a time I had last summer looking for a run-away horse in the Maine woods." In the same issue, the "Notes on Contributors" betrayed him. They said: "Mr. Oscar Williams . . . will publish next autumn through the Yale Press, his first book of verse." This was a bit rough on Oscar, whose review was really admirable.

* * *

Speaking of Kroch's International Bookstore reminds me that I have not spoken of it before. It is unique. Books imported from every country under Mr. Williams' stars here may be purchased, and the shop has an atmosphere that is delightful. The newest feature is a photograph gallery of celebrities, in which appear the (sometimes disappointing) portraits of many of the best American writers of the day, among them, Cabell, Hergesheimer, George Jean Nathan and John V. A. Weaver. All the photos are autographed to Mr. Kroch.

* * *

The Dill Pickle Club is dead. For years the Dill Pickle Club was a rendezvous for near-thinkers of a radical turn of mind, long-haired poets and short-haired women, socialists, freethinkers, sex adepts, and publicity seekers generally. It achieved a curious reputation, and parlor bolshevists took their friends there much as, in earlier days, determined bohemians sought the sloppy tables of Madame Galli's and in the swash of Budweiser caught a remote echo of the waves that beat on seacoast Bohemia. At the Dill Pickle, anyone with a "message" was welcome to speak, and for his speaking received half the contents of the impromptu tambourine. There, any night, one might bathe in Bolshevism or Buddhism, get drunk on Baudelaire or Edward Carpenter, or learn the advantages of sabotage or bisexualism. It was all a bit interesting, all more or less innocuous, and all half-baked. The club furnished an admirable show-spot for visitors who were not too sophisticated to be critical, and, in a sense, it will be missed.

* * *

The annual cowboy championship contest in Grant Park, a spectacle vouchsafed Chicago by reason of the sectional popularity of our sporting Mayor, will have come and gone by the time this letter is in print. I have no doubt at this writing that it will be as rough and brutal a performance as the recent Dempsey-Carpentier show, and that it will attract the same sort of red-blooded men and women. One thing perhaps we shall be spared: the illiterate expertings of newspaper specialists, in praise or disparagement of the several champions.

* * *

It should be added that this signal evidence of our municipal greatness

which is to include roping, riding and "bulldogging"—the latter one of the cruelest of sports, involving as it does the hideous torture of bulls—is partly for the benefit of the Minor Children's Home and Aid Society.

* * *

It was my privilege, recently, to read the manuscript of a paper on American Literature prepared by a suburban club woman for reading at her club, I think to the Tuesday Literary Class or some such group. From among many gems of criticism, I culled the following on Brander Matthews:

"His short stories are virtuous but have no thought of others."

"His waves of realism are not plausible but are convincing."

This is delightful and, God knows, it may be true! It suggests the schoolroom scene: Q. Is the earth flatter at the equator or at the poles? A. Yes. Q. Which? A. Flatter.

* * *

I wonder if your editorialist of last month is correct in his supposition that Madison Cawein was a professional gambler? I hope it is true; but I once met Cawein, and he told me something about himself. He was in charge of a poolroom, in his early days, and kept tab on the earnest young gamblers who frequented the cloudy chamber, but I had supposed him only the accountant and boy-manager of a small place whose activities would scarcely justify its being called a gambling hall.

Possibly Cawein *was* a gambler, however; I think most poets are. He was an immensely decent and affable fellow, at any rate, and looked about as much like a poet as I do a banker. Indeed he looked like a barber, or so it seemed to me, although I may have caught this prejudical resemblance unconsciously from the fact that he was shaving when I entered his room. Small, gray-haired partly bald, with a close-cropped gray mustache, he was dextrously manipulating an open razor before a hotel mirror.

"And that's where I learned a great deal about human nature," he said. "Ten years in a pool room. Meanwhile, I was longing for nature herself, and as soon as I could I got away and headed for the woods."

* * *

May I say in closing that I am now working on the second edition of my anthology, "In Praise of Stevenson?" I want this new edition to contain every scrap of verse written to or about R. L. S., that it is possible to obtain. The first edition contained about one hundred poems, and I have since brought together about fifty more. I shall thankfully welcome contributions, original or otherwise, from readers or writers who may have such items, together with such bibliographical data concerning the verses as may be available.

* * *

Only occasionally does Walter M. Hill, Chicago's leading antiquarian bookseller, enter the publishing field. When he does, book readers and book buyers are assured an authentic work of a more than usual merit. Mr. Hill has just issued in a limited edition of five hundred copies, "The Lost Oracles," a Masque, by James Westfall Thompson, in which Mr. Thompson dramatizes the struggle

between the cults of antiquity and historical Christianity. It is a distinguished volume. The odes, hymns and lyric songs that sing in its pages are particularly beautiful, and the ritual of the ancient cults is sonorously revealed. The prose descriptions of the temple settings are accurate and verbally lovely. Lovers of the ancient paganism will discover in this work a flavor of old singers known to us only by a few precious survivals. Physically, the volume is a delight.

Mr. Thompson, a professor of history at the University of Chicago, is a widely known classical and mediaeval scholar. A few years ago he successfully hoaxed the book world with an extraordinary poem, "The Last Pagan," which purported to be a translation of a long-lost manuscript, discovered by the translator in a French monastery.

* * *

Sanctuary

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

I have remembrance of a tumult of faces
  Pouring past me on the thoroughfare,
And of a city strange with luminous places,—
  And how I bathed me in the currents there.
Beauty was all too frequent to be rare:
  And I forgot the spell of starry spaces
Athirst for women in the lamplight glare,
  Haunted by shadows and their fugitive graces.

But when I left the broad ways in the gloaming
  Weary with beauty which I could not share,
I turned me, to your sanctuary, homing,
  And climbed a more resplendent flight of stair,
And from those perilous nights of deep sea roaming
  Found harbour in the quiet of your hair.

Reviews

THE EMPEROR JONES

By EUGENE O'NEILL.

(Boni and Liveright, 1921.)

FEAR, that most imperative element of man's psychology, is the framework on which is built Eugene O'Neill's thoroughly original play, "The Emperor Jones." There is no particular pigeon hole of types in which this one character might be placed. The Emperor Jones, the ebony-hued, self-appointed royalty in garish uniform, brass buttons, chevrons and gold braid, makes his first appearance when he demands, "Who dare whistle dat way in my palace? Who dare wake up de emperor?" This pompous ruler reigns over a colony of fearing subjects, native of an un-named island of the West Indies. He is the Emperor Jones whom an ordinary, plebeian bullet cannot kill —no, only the silver bullet which he, himself, has had made can do that. Only one, Smithers, knows of the crimes he is being sought for by the white man. But the Emperor humiliates him with, "Dere's little stealin' like you does, and dere's big stealin' like I does."

That point of the story where, the rebelling subjects assembled in the hills, the emperor starts toward the Great Forest fleeing for his life, with the continual rhythmic beating of the tom-toms in the distance as an invisible background, is the beginning of a series of dramatic surprises that cannot leave a question in one's mind as to who is the nearest approach to a truly great dramatist that America can boast.

From the begining of the emperor's flight to the end of the play, the monotonous tom-toms of the rebelling natives can be heard. The suspense of the play is heightened by the terror-exciting sound that increases or slackens as the moment demands. While this is a one-act play, it is composed of eight scenes, all but the first depicting some stage of the flight of the fallen monarch through the Great Forest.

As he realizes he has lost his bearings in the dark, the cocky, self-assurance that he has not quite shaken off, changes to fear and finally to madness. The criminal episodes of his life come before him in hallucinations as he repeatedly sinks exhausted. Each fear taunts him until he fires at it, when, consequently the maddening sound of the tom-tom grows perceptibly louder in the distance. As the final hallucination possesses him, and, crazed, he has fired at it, he has fired the silver bullet which was to have been reserved for the Emperor Jones. They brought him out of the Great Forest at the spot where he went in at the beginning of his flight; but because he was the Invincible they had killed him with silver bullets. We are glad they were not lead.

There is much of interest in this play for the professional and dilettante Freuds, Coriats and Tridons. G. Stanley Hall in his recent "Morales" says, "Where fear is yielded to with abandon almost anything may be done. Men lose their orientation in space and may rush directly at the enemy instead of fleeing from him. In panicky fugues men of-

ten tend to flee over the same course in which they have advanced, sometimes going around sharp angles instead of taking quicker short-cuts to safety because they have advanced along these angles."

Mr. O'Neill, with a comprehensive knowledge of stage technicalities, places his characters in this work in the settings that make more subtle the designedly subtle, and accentuate the obvious. In the first scene, the arrogance of the emperor is exaggerated by the impression of exhausting and enervating heat. It would be hard for his subjects to find the spirit to resist a sovereignty in so oppressive an atmosphere. The very crimson and orange of the setting conveys the idea of dazzling heat.

The Theatre Guild—whose approval gives any play the pass-key to fame, so discriminating have they been in their choosing—first introduced the play in New York. With Charles Gilpen, the negro player, as the Emperor Jones, it is hoped that lovers of the drama outside of the Metropolis may some day see this work on the road There are two other plays in this book. "Diff'rent" has to do with sea-folk, and the complex psychology of the characters makes a lapse of thirty years necessary between the two acts that comprise the play. In this we do not have the amusing dialogue that lightens "The Emperor Jones." "The Straw", to be produced this winter, is of the sanitorium and the story engrossing, but we wonder if it would not be difficult for any organization but the Theatre Guild to make it anything but disagreeable in its sordid details.

However, in "The Emperor Jones" Mr. O'Neill takes us to the Land of Fulfillment that we began to look for in "The Moon of the Caribbees' and "Beyond the Horizon."

BEATRICE VAUGHAN DALE.

* * *

DUST

By MR. and MRS. E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS.

(*Boni and Liveright*, 1921.)

THIS novel is so cunningly blended into a conception of life that the demarcation defies the casual eye and the purpose, if there be one, is forgotten in the simple interest evoked throughout the current of the story.

Rose and Martin Wade threaten momentarily to melt into symbols. But they do not, in spite of the scrupulous objectivity with which their creators regard them, because of the wealth of detail in which they are envisaged and the unique emotional situations and relationships in which circumstances place them. And because they do not so melt away, that undefined, yet not undiscerned, attitude which appears to have dictated the story's major plan is impressed upon the reader with a double force, unless that philosophical unity preserved in the chapter titles "gives away" the secret so closely shielded in the tale.

We might call "Dust" a modern and Americanized allegory of hopelessness, of defeat, of frustration engendered by too close absorption in the pursuit of wealth. In temper, "Dust" is a Kansas variation on a Russian theme, but in its spareness, in the almost perfect relationship between matter and material, it is nearly French.

The story, completely envisaged in terms of farm life and containing a concentrated version of the origin and development of a Kansas farm community, is told with an unobtrusive simplicity, with a satisfying adequateness of detail, yet with an economy of manner that is positively harsh. There is not the slightest yielding to the tempting allurements for a story-teller that linger on the roadside of every plot, such as the tardy infatuation of Martin for the younger Rose. The evolution of Martin's belated affection and the manner in which news of Billie's death is transmitted and received are excellent examples of how beautifully the author's non-involvement in the emotional stresses of their characters can be rendered. Yet passages that can arouse an equally intense emotion on second reading must flower from some depth in the writers.

The nature of the characters, whether yielding to, or resisting, the harsh commands of their environment dominates in the construction of the tale and the writers submit to it in that unfaltering manner in which Martin and Billie and Rose ran true to their courses—the first two to death and the last to a respectable futility.

HARRY SALPETER.

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THE NOISE OF THE WORLD

By ADRIANA SPADONI.

(*Boni and Liveright*, 1921.)

"THE SWING of the Pendulum" was a remarkable first novel. That it was not a false dawn is proved conclusively by the present volume. Miss Spadoni has a genuine gift. She has something definite to say—and actually succeeds in saying it, if not with directness, at least with lucidity and a certain amount of originality and charm. "The Swing of the Pendulum" should have been cut and pruned. For, though it was wonderfully engrossing, it rambled about unconscionably. She shows, now, a greater mastery of the technique of her art as a novelist.

"The Noise of the World" is a study in idealism. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say a study of idealists.

Of Roger, the lovable, passionate, visionary idealist; of Anne also an idealist, but one of a more dogged variety; of Black Tom, the "idol of the laboring world," who spent his youth in "mines, and shops and libraries;" of Merle, who loved him; and of Katya, the Russian Jewess.

And of the Mitchells who are not idealists at all. They are really rather dreadful people who live in wicked ugliness. An unamiable, dictatorial narrow old man who suffers an unconvincing change of heart, and his silly, ineffectual, well-meaning wife. They have succumbed to pot-roast, which is, after all, only "a pretense." It has not the "open honesty of stew." They are the type of couple who are over-popular in this year's fiction, and they leave one feeling older than the rocks, etc., with one's eyelids more than a little weary.

From this environment Roger takes Anne. Their struggle for happiness, for adjustment, is depicted with sympathetic insight. Miss Spadoni's picture of the tragi-comedy of socialism is strangely moving. "Right Wing, Left Wing

Socialist, Syndicalist, Communist, I. W. W., they're all headed right and there's something the matter with them all." * * "Names, names," sighs Black Tom, "all names for the same thing—the new world that's struggling to be born. Science, art, religion, politics, we're all fighting for the same end—to root out the dead old forms, give new growths a chance. We're all beating in our diffent ways to the same thing—Understanding, Beauty, Unity. One fits in where he can."

There are also the people who see some "great change in the conduct of world affairs looming in huge, vague mass," and the ones who see only the unimportant details. And they accuse one another of using "wrong methods that delay progress." There is one "young man with wild, kind eyes who forgave all bigotry and personal misunderstanding and wrote fierce revolutionary songs, clarion calls to these people whom he forgave for not hearing," and there is a plump little Boston widow who, "for the first time in her life had found an opportunity to berate car conductors—and minor officials in a loud voice. These she called publicly, in piercing tones—'the wage slaves of a rotten system'—and urged them to organize—but, until the arrival of the Millennium, she invested her income with remarkable shrewdness in bonds."

But all these are not Anne's people. It it not her world. Not the sweetly ordered, comfortable sanity she dreams of. She approaches Christian Science—tentatively—with disastrous results, and finally takes her nerve-tortured body and sick heart to be healed by the imperishable beauty of the hills.

The book ends upon a note of rather melancholy optimism.

ALICE SESSUMS LEOVY.

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CHARACTER AND OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES

By GEORGE SANTAYANA.

(Scribner's, 1921.)

THE residence of George Santayana for over a quarter of a century at Harvard cast a sort of honor upon the United States. Like Lafcadio Hearn, he was a borrowed star, but he illuminated our murky firmament none the less. He courteously provided us with our saddest lack, a wise man. Now that he has left us, we are without an intelligence.

"Character and Opinion in the United States," Mr. Santayana's very detached reminiscences of American life as he knew it, is an occult work. To the general reader it will be neither interesting nor intelligible. It is the work of a philosopher, long occupied in his cloister with the problem of being. It is a work which must afford deep pleasure to the lovers of literature and thought, but which is directed solely to the few who indulge in these occult pursuits. It is not a contribution of any practical importance to an analysis of the American democracy. Mr. Santayana's attention has always centered on the mind and soul—faculties for which the American democracy is not as yet distinguished. His book is an occult book.

These lectures are devoted to American philosophy, that is to say, to some-

thing that does not exist. With the exception of Mr. Santayana himself, we have not had a sage since Emerson. We have, now, neither a sage nor a real school of philosophy. There is a feverish restlessness in the field of religion, marked by an influx of Orientalism, which may portend something. But, as yet, American life is, as Mr. Santayana says, terribly empty. We haven't any philosophy.

He dismisses William James and Josiah Royce, as they deserve, with very amiable damnation, and in excellent appraisals.

He attempts to outline the American character, as a moral or thinking entity, and finds that it is young, greedy, intoxicated, hopeful, practical, but equipped only withready-made, second-hand, unquestioned moral, philosophical and religious beliefs. He hopes that eventually American life will stabilize and that in the end we shall have a pervading culture and wisdom. He does not feel certain. But, polished pessimist and keen examiner that he is, Mr. Santayana is never very certain of anything. He admits, in his preface, his premonition of an impending dark age, and offers hope, without firm belief, in a better future. He thinks that our heritage of liberty—English liberty—(which we are so swiftly losing) is our best heritage. Perhaps it was.

The merit of "Character and Opinion in the United States" is that it is an expression of Mr. Santayana's character and opinion. There can be no practical value in a discussion of so frail and airy a thing as American philosophy. The value of the book is the value of all lyrical literature. Mr. Santayana proceeds in the expression of himself. As the papers in this volume were originally spoken addresses, the perfection of his best cloister-work is not in it. But the intelligent few will enjoy it, as they have enjoyed Mr. Santayana's work for the past thirty years, for its subtlety, its precision, its delicate artitsry of style; the exhilarating pessimism and the charming doubt that color all his conclusions.

MARVIN LEAR.

* * *

THE JUNKMAN AND OTHER POEMS

By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE
(Doubleday and Co., 1921.)

MR. Le Gallienne offers, in this volume, a discouraging medley of commonplace verse and authentic music. Unfortunately, the commonplace greatly preponderates and one must search carefully for the indications of poetry. Mr. Le Gallienne's genius appears here and there almost hopelessly smothered under facility and banality. His authentic elixir is so diluted that the taste is flat. One realizes that Mr. Le Gallienne long ago gave up quality for quantity. Yet nothing that he may do, however laboured, however dull, can detract from the excellent merit of his best work. He—in this, much like Mr. Witter Bynner—dilutes a very real genius to such a point that it is almost unrecognizable. These two poets—American and English—seem to be constantly determined to extract from every idea and every emotion, as many poems and as many rhymes as is pos-

sible. They never neglect an opportunity. They seize on the slightest excuse to versify. They seem to have foresworn completely the faculty of selection.

One feels in reading the ballades and lyrics that make up "The Junkman" that most of this material was written at space rates.

It is a pity. For Mr. Le Gallienne has written good poetry and could have written better. He, like Andrew Lang, has dissipated and diluted into twenty volumes, a genius which, if concentrated into a small vessel, might have made wine heady enough to intoxicate posterity.

JOHN MCCLURE.

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Train Lost

BY WILLIAM GRIFFITH

"Too late,"
The Train Master said,
"Gates closed for the Six-thirteen."
So I wait for the Six-thirty-six.
And my heart that was ticking too slow
For the Six-thirteen,
Ticks on for the six-thirty-six;
Ticks on,
Ticks on,
Behind time . . . perhaps . . . slowing down.
Tick, tick.

Hush!

Friend,
Into the night
Ahead,
Who knows
When the Last Train goes?

ANNOUNCEMENT

WE feel that an explanation is due our subscribers anent this double number of *The Double Dealer*. Stock excuses will not go. The war is over. There is no shortage of paper to-day. Printers are back on the job. The name of Burleson has gone into history.

Here are the facts: Our January issue should have been labeled February, in that it did not appear on the stands until January 7th. We commenced late in blissful ignorance of the difficulties that beset publishers. Once tardy, we found it impossible to make up for lost time. Each issue, seems, like a French clock, to have lost a day, until this cumulative delay proved a decided mechanical handicap. The American public demands its monthly periodicals in the month preceding that announced on their covers. The July number of *The Double Dealer* reached the distributors on July 11th. Thus, in order to overcome this difficulty, we deemed it expedient to consolidate the August and September issues, so making it possible to publish the October issue on or about September 20th.

If any of our patrons feel that they are not getting the full value of their subscription by this arrangement, we will willingly extend such subscriptions an additional month.

THE DOUBLE DEALER FOR OCTOBER.

THE October issue offers, among other entertaining features, an article on the American language by John V. A. Weaver, author of the widely discussed "In American", poems; an essay by Howard Mumford Jones, the noted Southern author; an appreciation of modern violinists by Arthur Symons; and an interesting variety of verse and prose by John McClure, Alfred Kreymborg, Stephen Ta Van, Maxwell Armfield, Oscar Williams, Jeannette Marks, Walter Yust, Richard LeGallienne, Louis Gilmore, Marx G. Sabel, Lafcadio Hearn, and others.

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AN invitation is extended to patrons of Southern letters to communicate with us in regard to the improvement and enlargement of this magazine. Criticisms, suggestions, any constructive ideas, are sought. It has long been our belief that there must be persons sufficiently interested in the advancement of literature in the South, to offer a prize in their names through such a medium as this for the best short story and poem, respectively, published during the course of a year. We shall be pleased to get in touch with any man or woman in sympathy with this project.

BASIL THOMPSON
JULIUS WEIS FRIEND,
Editors.